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Ontario launches more money into the orbit of MaRS

After a scathing report from the auditor general, province defends its loan to Discovery District — and ups the amount PAGE 8

Survey finds out how safe Toronto residents feel

From bus routes to subway lines to downtown streets, Metro's City Matters looks at how secure we feel navigating the city PAGE 12

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NEWS WORTH SHARING.

PAYING MORE PER POUR

Tory Baxter, a server at Spirits Bar and Grill on Church Street, pours a tall, cold beer on Thursday. A national restaurant group has asked the Competition Bureau to investigate a non-compete agreement between the LCBO and the Beer Store, claiming the deal restricts competition and inflates the price of beer in restaurants, bars and pubs. Story, page 3. DAVID VAN DYKE/METRO

Armed TTC staff worries councillor

Transit. Gord Perks raises concerns about training, oversight of expanding force of fare inspectors wielding batons

LUKE SIMCOE
Metro Online

A debate is brewing over whether "the kinder way" should be arming its staff, as the TTC gets set to expand its complement of baton-toting fare inspectors.

The commission is bringing on 80 new inspectors to prevent fraud as more streetcars will allow all-door boarding in the new year. In keeping with current policy, those checking for proof of payment will be equipped with handcuffs and collapsible batons.

Batons can be 'effective'

A 1998 report on the use of force among police acknowledged that "batons can be very effective in immobilizing belligerent individuals." However, the same report concluded that "an unintended strike to an individual's head during the confusion of a struggle or the intentional misuse of a baton on a suspect could cause death."

"It's purely for protection," TTC spokesman Brad Ross said. "Some people don't necessarily appreciate getting a $235 fine. Our employees need to be able to protect themselves and the public should the situation escalate."

Not everyone is a fan. Among the critics is Coun. Gord Perks, who's written a letter to the TTC board expressing concerns about oversight and training given to fare inspectors.

"Somebody at the TTC thinks they have the authority and the mandate to equip and train people in the use of force against Torontonians," Perks told Metro. "But they don't have that authority. Only the police service does."

The TTC already employs a number of special constables as enforcement officers. Under an agreement with the Toronto Police Service, those staff members are given use-of-force training and must obtain an official police clearance letter.

Their special status allows them to arrest and detain individuals even if they haven't directly witnessed an offence.

Ross said fare inspectors receive the same training as special constables, but are not designated as such.

The agreement between the TTC and police stipulates that allegations of "major misconduct" by transit enforcement officers are investigated by the special constable liaison unit, and not the TTC. It's unclear whether the same provision extends to fare inspectors.

Coun. Gord Perks
LUCAS OLENIUK/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

"That's actually worse," Perks said. "If the fare inspection people are not covered by the agreement with police, then I don't care what training they're receiving because the police aren't supervising it."

Ross said the TTC's existing fare inspectors have been carrying the batons since August. To date, they have not been used.

"If they don't need them, then don't carry them," Perks shot back.

Ross said the TTC will address all of Perks's concerns at the next board meeting.

For more on the discussion, see Voices on page 40.

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NEWS

Linda Jeffrey. Brampton's mayor takes salary cut

Brampton Mayor Linda Jeffrey made good on an election promise Wednesday by dramatically cutting her own pay.

She also called out her predecessor, Susan Fennell, who was once the highest-paid mayor in Canada.

"Public service should not be seen as a vehicle for personal enrichment," Jeffrey said shortly before council unanimously supported her motion to reduce the mayor's salary to $165,850, which includes Jeffrey's pay for sitting on Peel Region council.

Fennell, who lost the October election with 12 per cent of the vote, was Canada's highest-paid mayor in 2012, making $213,000, which included her regional salary.

Jeffrey pointed out that the mayors of Ottawa, Mississauga and Toronto — cities with significantly larger populations than Brampton— make substantially less than what Fennell was earning.

Jeffrey was asked if she would like to see councillors follow suit with a similar cut to their own pay,.

She told Torstar News Service, "I look forward to my council colleagues taking the lead on this issue."

Their pay, among the highest for councillors in Canada, will be dealt with at a council workshop next week.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Justin Timberlake kicks it up at the ACC

Megastar Justin Timberlake, seen here with one of the stage dancers in his show, was in Toronto at the Air Canada Centre Thursday night, performing his 20/20 Experience Tour for the second time in six months to a sold-out crowd. TOM PANDI/FOR METRO

Consumer minister joins call for review of Beer Store deal

Booze business. David Orazietti chimes in on secret deal between the LCBO and the Beer Store

There is a growing chorus of voices, including Ontario's consumer minister, calling for a long-standing secret deal between the LCBO and the Beer Store to be reviewed.

However, Finance Minister Charles Sousa insists it's already under review by privatization czar Ed Clark.

Representatives from all political parties at Queen's Park say the deal, which was revealed by Torstar News Service, drives up the costs of beer for consumers and even more so for restaurants and bars.

Quoted

"The agreement can be terminated at any point ... If the government were to cancel it today, Ontario consumers would ... have cheaper prices by the summer." James Rilett, Restaurants Canada

"I am not opposed to any kind of review that helps to provide better value for consumers in Ontario," Consumer Minister David Orazietti said Wednesday.

His comments followed comments by Restaurants Canada stating that it has asked the federal Competition Bureau to investigate the "non-compete" deal between the Crown corporation and the foreign-owned, quasi-monopoly beer retailer. The bureau confirmed it received the request.

Restaurants Canada claims the deal exposed by Torstar restricts competition and inflates the price of beer in restaurants, bars and pubs.

"We have known of the existence of an agreement for years, but we did not know the depth of the complicity. This agreement fixes prices, territories and products," said James Rilett, Ontario vice-president for Restaurants Canada.

"Ontarians need a neutral third party to look into this secretive agreement."

Jeff Newton, president of Canada's National Brewers, countered with his own statement: "The allegations made by Restaurants Canada are false and inaccurate, building on misleading and inaccurate statements reported this week by the Toronto Star.

"Restaurants Canada's claims that the Beer Store sets beer prices and that the LCBO/Beer Store Framework Agreement controls beer prices are both categorically false and misleading."

Newton said the Competition Bureau has had the Framework Agreement for a long time.

"The Bureau has never advised the Beer Store or its shareholders that it views the framework Agreement as anti-competitive or that it is in any way contrary to the Competition Act," he said.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Gas plants. OPP conduct new search for evidence

The anti-rackets squad of the Ontario Provincial Police has executed a new search warrant in its 18-month investigation of deleted emails in the Liberals' gas plants scandal, Torstar News Service has learned.

Officers swept in to government offices at 222 Jarvis St. — the former Sears building now housing part of the province's information technology services — on Nov. 27, Sgt. Peter Leon of the OPP confirmed Wednesday. That was three days after the warrant was obtained.

The search warrant has been sealed and Torstar is taking legal action to have it released so details of the operation can be made public.

"Due to the sealing and the ongoing nature of the investigation, the OPP cannot speak to this matter at this time," Leon said in an email.

It's the latest development in the lingering fallout from former premier Dalton McGuinty's decision to scrap locally unpopular gas-fired power plants in Oakville and Mississauga before the 2011 provincial election to save five Liberal-held ridings.

$1.1B cost

Auditor general Bonnie Lysyk — whose scathing annual report this week has Premier Kathleen Wynne's government scrambling to defend its energy and infrastructure spending — has estimated the cancellations could cost up to $1.1 billion over 20 years.

News of the warrant comes as MPPs on the legislature's justice policy committee meet Thursday to finish a draft report on lengthy hearings into the closures and their aftermath, including allegations that politically sensitive emails and other documents were illegally deleted.

Both the Conservatives and NDP have pledged to write "minority" versions of the committee report, outlining concerns they don't believe the Liberal majority will raise.

The search warrant two weeks ago is the second one executed by the OPP in its investigation of the gas plants debacle.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

The partially built gas plant in Mississauga is seen in this 2013 file photo. BERNARD WEIL/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Critics slam cost of airport express fare

Union-Pearson Express train. $27.50 too much for 'luxury line': Transit advocate

LUKE SIMCOE
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Metrolinx unveiled its fares for the new Union-Pearson Express train Wednesday, eliciting immediate cries of elitism from transit activists.

After months of speculation, Metrolinx CEO Bruce McCuaig confirmed the 25-minute journey from the airport to Union Station will cost $27.50. Presto card holders will receive a discounted fare of $19, while airport employees will be eligible for a $300 monthly pass, paring their cost of a single ride down to about $7.50 for a five-day-a-week commuter, said Metrolinx CEO Bruce McCuaig.

"It feels like April Fools' Day," said Jessica Bell, head of the TTCriders advocacy group. "People can't afford to pay that much to move around the city."

Bell derided UPX as "a luxury line" that is out of reach for lower-income residents. She would prefer to see Metrolinx fold the line into the existing TTC network.

"You've got 23 kilometres of track that runs through the heart of Toronto. The provincial government needs to get their priorities straight, build more stations and ensure more people can use that line," she said. "And when you rethink that vision, you need to rethink that price."

Although he was glad to see a rapid rail link to Pearson, Toronto Airport Council of Unions representative Sean Smith said unless fares are lowered, the UPX leaves lower-income workers at the airport stranded in "a transit wasteland."

"Pearson is the largest workplace in Canada. We've got 40,000 people in one building and right now we have one bus," Smith said, referring to the 192 Airport Rocket from Kipling Station.

Smith said Metrolinx should look to Vancouver as an example. The Canada Line SkyTrain extension was opened in 2009 and takes passengers from downtown Vancouver to the airport for $9.

"It's an affordable model for everyone," Smith said.

Quoted

"It feels like April Fools' Day."

Jessica Bell, head of the TTCRiders group reacts to cost of Union-Pearson Express

Engineer Bob Methot takes in the sites at Pearson Airport's Terminal 1 from behind the controls of the new Union Pearson Express, or UP Express, train on Thursday. BERNARD WEIL/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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U of T researcher dreams of widespread spray-on solar cells

sprayLD. New method of making energy film would replace arduous and expensive process

GILBERT NGABO
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A University of Toronto researcher is reinventing solar-cell production in a way that could change how we power our devices — and possibly our houses.

Post-doctoral fellow Illan Kramer hopes to make life a lot easier by producing cells that are sprayed onto a flexible film, which can be wrapped around everything from cellphones to — well, you name it.

He's using miniscule light-sensitive materials known as colloidal quantum dots put in a form of ink produced by chemists at the university lab.

The way solar cells are now produced, called spin coding or batch processing, is too slow and covers too small of an area, Kramer said.

"If you want to coat many square kilometres to try to solve the world's energy issues, you won't do it with somebody dipping a drop of liquid at a time," he said. "You have to be able to coat very large areas very quickly."

Kramer said his model, called sprayLD and still under development, does that and makes cells easy, fast and cheap to manufacture. A surface as big as a car's roof coated with his film could produce enough energy to power three 100-watt light bulbs.

Kramer's hope is to one day have technicians lugging backpacks filled with all the material needed for quick spray-coating of the roof of home, for example.

He knows he's a long way from that point.

"We're pretty pleased with how it's gone so far but we still have some major scientific hurdles to clear before we get to what we want to achieve," he said.

Kramer's research is getting backing from IBM.

Scope

"If you want to coat many square kilometres to try to solve the world's energy issues, you won't do it with somebody dipping a drop of liquid at a time."
Post-doctoral fellow Illan Kramer

Illan Kramer, the researcher behind sprayLD, displays an example of a film that would contain spray-on solar cells. DAVID VAN DYKE/METRO

Scientist presses Grandiose research on stem cells

Dr. Andras Nagy at Toronto's Mount Sinai Hospital. His project employs a team of nearly 50 researchers across four continents to document the process of creating stem cells. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

When Mount Sinai Hospital researcher Dr. Andras Nagy started a huge project to demystify the process by which specialized cells become stem cells, he wasn't expecting to discover a whole new type of stem cell.

It's a big finding, because "identifying a new class of stem cells means a 100 per cent increase in possible sources" of cells for therapeutic use.

His latest research, dubbed Project Grandiose because of its sheer scale, has involved a team of nearly 50 researchers across four continents, documenting the process of creating stem cells. These cells — called induced pluripotent stem cells, or iPS cells — can be used to form any type of cell in the body, as an alternative to using the more controversial stem cells derived from embryos.

The findings will be published Thursday in Nature and Nature Communications.

One of the newest applications of stem cells is treating and preventing loss of vision using iPS cells. Japan has permitted the use of these cells to regenerate eye tissue this year.

Nagy characterizes this procedure as an "icebreaker," hoping it will lead to further treatment and perhaps even cures in other diseases.

But understanding these cells first is key to safer use.

"If we understand this process better and deeper, we will be in a better position to create safer and (more therapeutically useful) cell types in the future," said Nagy.

In examining this process in "high-definition," the research team discovered a new type of stem cell — the F-class iPS cell.

This is significant not only because it may mean there are even more types of stem cells but also because F-class cells are easier and cheaper to grow as compared to iPS cells, said Nagy.

He also notes that F-class cells may be better for treating neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson's.

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Province pumps millions more into MaRS

Innovation. CEO says loan needed to finish Phase 2 construction

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD
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A day after a scathing report from Ontario's auditor general, the provincial government not only defended a $235-million loan to MaRS Discovery District — it upped the money.

Another $86 million will be put toward the hub for research and innovation to help lease out the mostly empty Phase 2, an extension to the original suite of workspaces in the former Toronto General Hospital building at 101 College St.

The money is part of recommendations from an expert panel commissioned by the province in September, to find a way forward for a project that has become increasingly mired in controversy.

Economic Development Minister Brad Duguid called it "the best way to protect Ontario's investment."

Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk's report called the initial $235-million loan to get Phase 2 going risky and said leases signed at the 780,000-square-foot, 20-storey development were "not sufficient to support loan interest payments, which started to become due in January 2014." Before Wednesday's announcement, two-thirds of Phase 2 was sitting empty.

The additional $86 million will bring dramatic change and flood the building with tenants, said MaRS CEO Ilse Treurnicht. It will allow the centre to finish interior construction so tenants can move in.

"And it will service the operating shortfall until those tenants are in and paying rent," Treurnicht said. "After that, the math works pretty straightforward because the building starts generating revenue right away."

She blamed a set of "lease parameters" for the leasing problems.

In September, the province announced a plan to buy out the private developer of Phase 2, Alexandria Real Estate, which controlled the lease details — including cost — and had set the price at higher than market rates.

New tenants for Phase 2, under new leases, include Ryerson University and League, a startup that will let people manage their health via a digital health platform.

The province said letters of intent from more prospective tenants will push occupancy to 65 per cent.

"Now that we've turned this corner, the building will fill up as fast as people can build out and move it," Treurnicht said. "It'll double the size of our facility, and 6,000 people will come to work here every day."

A peek inside the Discovery District

The original building has been 'at and over capacity since it opened' in 2005, said CEO Ilse Treurnicht, with 100 tenants that include scientists, researchers, startups, midsize companies and investors. These are a few.

Etsy

Online marketplace that specializes in handmade products from sellers across Canada and around the world. Its Canadian headquarters has seven employees.

Airbnb

Canadian arm of the online hub to rent out space in your home — or rent a room in someone else's — moved in, in October, with three employees.

Miami Mice Research Corp.

The biotech company is developing an early diagnostic test for lung cancer using mice.

Synaptive Medical Inc.

Develops medical equipment and applications for neurosurgical procedures. The company already has space in Phase 2 and is looking to take over a whole floor.

Self Care Catalysts

Focuses on improving patient self-care. It developed Health Storylines, a mobile and web-based platform that lets patients use health apps to achieve goals.

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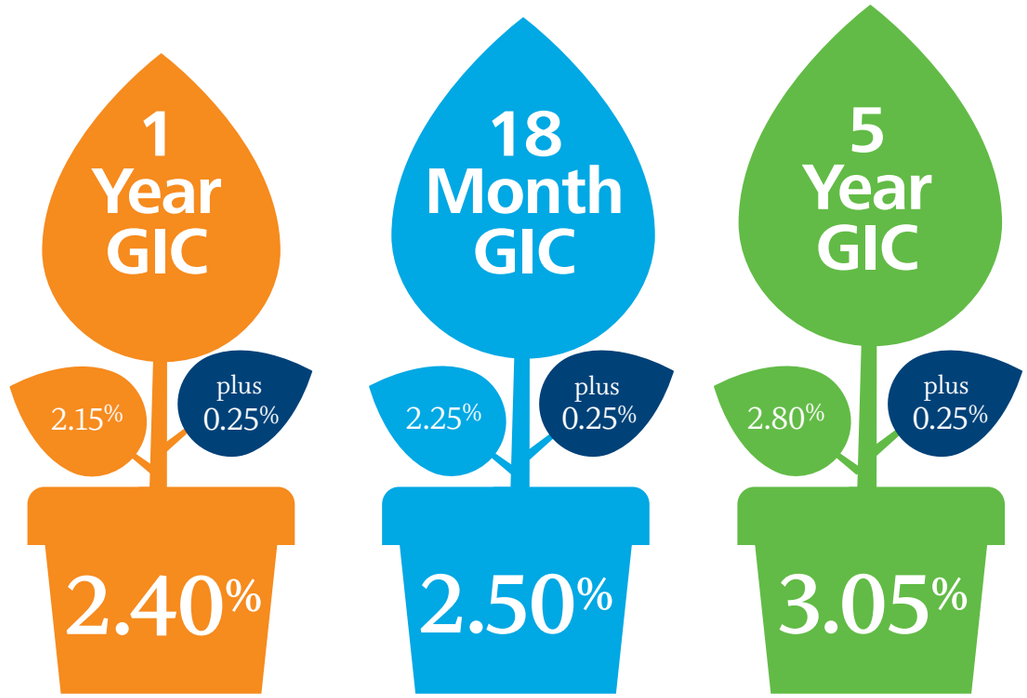

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Martha Gartley of Toronto, right, has been fighting Ebola in Kailahun, Sierra Leone. She's pictured here with teammate Joshua Salia in Sierra Leone. CONTRIBUTED

Time honours T.O. 'Ebola fighters'

Time magazine 2014 Person of the Year. Torontonian Martha Gartley among those recognized for their charity work

GILBERT NGABO
gilbert.ngabo@metronews.ca

Martha Gartley knows all too well what it takes to fight Ebola.

For two months, the Toronto water and sanitation engineer was responsible for water supply, sanitation and wastewater management in the Ebola-stricken Kailahun district of Sierra Leone. From time to time, her work involved suiting up in protective gear and venturing into high-risk zones. It also involved cleaning facilities, and the "gloomy" work of body management for patients who don't recover.

"The job is overwhelming because it's so constant and the needs rise unexpectedly throughout the day and night," Gartley, who was deployed through Doctors Without Borders (MSF).

She's one of several Toronto faces represented by Time magazine's 2014 Person of the Year recognition, doled out Wednesday to all "Ebola Fighters."

Doctors Without Borders alone has sent about 30 Canadians — from medical and non-medical backgrounds — to Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea, 10 of whom are from Toronto.

Gartley praised humanitarian workers in Ebola-affected areas for their efforts in containing the spread of the virus, which has now claimed over 6,000 lives.

Bravery

"The rest of the world can sleep at night because a group of men and women are willing to stand and fight."

From Time magazine article on 2014 Person of the Year

If health holds up. Ford vows to return as mayor

Rob Ford says he's due for a fifth round of chemotherapy next week.

But if he beats cancer, he adds, he'll take another run for mayor of Toronto.

Ford, now a city councillor, told local TV station CP24 that his health is up and down but that he's "not going to stop fighting."

The ailing Ford says he is returning to hospital Monday for five straight days of treatment with results due in 2015, adding that chemo leaves him laid out in bed for a week after.

Asked about a comeback mayoral campaign in the 2018 election, Ford says "if my health holds up, my name will be on the ballot."

The controversial ex-mayor ditched his re-election campaign after being diagnosed in September with a rare and aggressive form of cancer, but ran for council instead and took back his old seat.

In the interview, Ford was repentant for his past unsavoury behaviour that brought international attention to the city — from admitting to smoking crack to his lewd remarks — saying "it was all my own fault."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Rob Ford wants to be mayor again
DAVID COOPER/TORONTO STAR

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OF RESPONDENTS SAID THEY CARRY A FLASHLIGHT FOR PERSONAL PROTECTION — 26% OF WOMEN AND 20% OF MEN

ISTOCK

The evolution of safety

From buses and subways to the streets of downtown, how secure do Torontonians feel while navigating the city?

JESSICA SMITH CROSS
jessica.smithcross@metronews.ca

Safety in Toronto changed in the late '80s.

From May 4, 1987, to May 26, 1990, the Scarborough Rapist attacked and sexually assaulted 14 young women, most between their bus stop and home.

"It was this particular predator — Paul Bernardo — lurking at bus stops in Scarborough that was the impetus for the Request Stop program," said TTC spokesman Brad Ross.

"It was originally targeted only at women, and now we've expanded that to everybody."

According to the City Matters survey conducted by MQO Research for Metro, today 64 per cent of men and 43 per cent of women feel safe taking transit home after 10 p.m.

The survey also revealed 57 per cent of men and 38 per cent of women feel safe walking downtown alone at night.

Only four per cent of men and nine per cent of women said they feel "very unsafe" taking transit home after 10 p.m.

"Those numbers speak to the fact that people feel safe on the system, and that reflects our own research," said Ross.

"On public transit, you are among other people so there is a sense of security."

The emergency alarms, transit and police officers on the system, and CCTV cameras contribute to safety, he said.

The cleanliness of stations contributes to people's feeling of safety.

The TTC is also working to address the issue of harassment on the TTC system and will be rolling out a plan next year, Ross said.

Another shift in safety is due to the advent of the cellphone, which is now the main item Torontonians carry for personal safety.

According to the survey, 80 per cent of Torontonians say they carry a charged cellphone for personal protection.

That beats out pre-smartphone staples such as flashlights (23 per cent), whistles (nine per cent) and personal alarms (six per cent). Seven per cent of people reported carrying pepper spray, which is illegal to carry to use as a weapon.

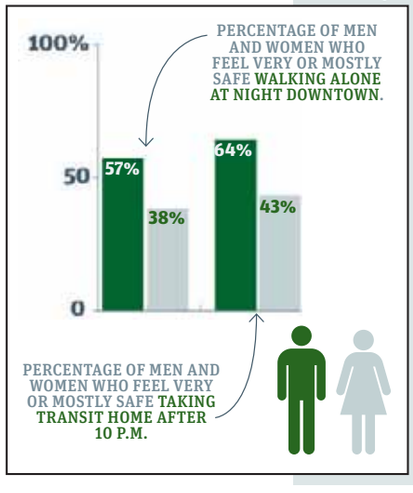
Carrying a cellphone — giving you direct access to the police — is a good idea, said Toronto police spokesman Const. David Hopkinson, but he noted Torontonians should keep their eyes on passersby instead of the screen.

"When you avert your gaze from somebody you show yourself to be more of a victim; you make eye contact and you can identify the person you're looking at — it tends to make them not wish to do anything against you," Hopkinson said.

Stay to lighted areas and carry a flashlight, he added.

And while the survey also found a majority of people (70 per cent of men and 74 per cent of women) avoid some areas of the city for safety reasons, Hopkinson — who acknowledged police statistics show higher crime in some areas than others — said people have to be mindful everywhere.

"If you can keep in pairs or get a ride, definitely do that, and if you know you're going to be in an area alone, let somebody know before you leave and you'll give them a call when you get there so you have some extra protection, somebody looking out for you."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57%
38%
64%
43%
PERCENTAGE OF MEN AND WOMEN WHO FEEL VERY OR MOSTLY SAFE TAKING TRANSIT HOME AFTER 10 P.M.

CITY MATTERS: PART IV

In this five-part series we hear what you, the people of Toronto, have to say on city issues.

- → Monday: Police services rank high in your eyes
- → Tuesday: Law-breaking cyclists vs. law-breaking drivers
- → Wednesday: Not everyone wants liquor outside the LCBO
- → **Thursday: We look at city safety and how it's changed**
- → Friday: What makes you happy (hint: it's not money)

For more and to comment, go to metronews.ca

Interview

SlutWalk co-founder among women who have their guard up

Heather Jarvis is among the 34 per cent of women who say they feel very or mostly unsafe walking alone at night in downtown Toronto.

"I've had experiences of violence, sexual violence and physical violence, so my back is already up most of the time when I walk through the world in public spaces," said Jarvis, a co-founder of SlutWalk, a movement of protests against victim-blaming.

She said she is not surprised that women report feeling less safe than men — adding street harassment contributes to feeling unsafe — but noted that factors other than gender, such as race and sexual orientation, also affect people's safety.

However, she said the conversation around women's safety has evolved, partly due to initiatives like SlutWalk, which began in 2011 in response to a Toronto Police Services officer's comment to students at York University that "women should avoid dressing like sluts in order not to be victimized."

"There are more instances where the emphasis is rightfully put on the people who make streets and public spaces feel unsafe, not on the people who feel unsafe themselves," she said. "They are not the problem."

Cyberstalker gets 22 years

Ohio predator. Father of 12-year-old Toronto girl tracked down man who was making sexual advances to his daughter online

When Cliff Ford learned the address of the Ohio man who'd made sexual advances to his 12-year-old daughter on the Internet, his instinct was to drive there and burn the house down.

"As a father, you want to kill the guy, but at the same time that's not doing justice," said the 37-year-old Toronto resident.

Instead, Ford gathered information about the man by posing as his daughter online; he then turned over his findings to police.

As a result, Nicholas Bowers, 31, was arrested at his home near Akron, Ohio, and charged with child exploitation. He was recently sentenced to 22 years in jail.

"Countless children have been saved from the predatory behaviour exhibited by Mr. Bowers," said Sgt. Eric East of the Springfield Township Police Department.

In early January, Ford, who has his two children's email accounts synced to his phone, noticed a subject line on a message intended for his daughter that read, "Hey sexy."

He immediately took over the account and discovered the sender was a man his daughter had met on gifboom.com, a social networking site that allows users to upload animated images of themselves.

Browsing through their chat history, Ford could see the man had been complimenting his daughter's appearance.

"He was basically grooming her," he said.

Ford pretended to be his daughter, hoping to discover the man's identity. Meanwhile, the chat content escalated, and Bowers, believing he was talking to Ford's daughter, sent a video of himself masturbating.

"That showed exactly what his intentions were," said Ford. "It was sickening."

Eventually, he tracked down the man's Facebook page.

"From there I was able to find out his home address, his car, where he worked."

Fighting the urge to confront Bowers himself, Ford alerted police in Springfield and Toronto. Due to the international nature of the case, the FBI got involved.

Const. Stuart Fleming, an investigator with the Toronto police child exploitation section, continued to pose as Ford's daughter to verify the information Ford obtained.

On Jan. 14, authorities searched Bowers' home, seizing USB drives and CDs labelled "child porn pics," according to Springfield police.

"When they entered his room there was actually child porn playing on ... a continuous loop," East said.

The FBI said Bowers had been part of a child porn ring since 2011. He was convicted of child enticement and receipt or distribution of visual depictions of minors engaged in sexually explicit conduct.

Ford appeared at the sentencing hearing in November to make a victim impact statement.

"I wanted to use the opportunity to spread the message for other parents to know they can watch out for their kids," he said.

His suggestions include using software to block adult content, monitoring children's email and social media accounts and keeping the lines of communication open.

"You have to talk with your kids about the dangers of being online .... so they feel they can come to you if they think there's a problem."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICES

Quoted

"As a father, you want to kill the guy, but at the same time that's not doing justice."

Cliff Ford, who tracked down an Internet predator grooming his 12-year-old daughter

Flying with Santa

A Children's Wish Foundation child from Toronto meets Santa for the first time on Thursday 8,000 feet above the city aboard Air Transat's 10th annual Flight in Search of Santa.

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Three people arrested in escort attacks

Toronto police have arrested three people, including a teenage girl, following a string of robberies that saw female escorts attacked in their hotel rooms by people posing as clients.

The arrests announced Wednesday come a day after police said two escorts — a 22-year-old and a 29-year-old — were targeted in separate incidents occurring hours apart.

Police allege one of the two was sexually assaulted by multiple men, while the other was found being held against her will when officers arrived.

Investigators allege that in incidents dating back to Oct. 25, a total of five women opened their hotel room door — four in the west-end, one in the east — expecting a client only to be rushed by multiple suspects.

Police say the rooms were ransacked and the women assaulted, with their personal belongings, cash and other items taken.

Two men, aged 20 and 22, along with a 17-year-old girl, are charged with robbery and related offences, while three others are sought by police.

Police say they are also investigating the three accused in connection with similar robberies of sex workers around the Greater Toronto Area.

Lenford Richards is charged with six counts each of robbery and forcible confinement, five counts of failing to comply and one count each of weapon dangerous and gang sexual assault.

Kevin Baigorria faces four counts each of robbery, forcible confinement and weapons dangerous.

The 17-year-old girl, who cannot be named under the youth justice law, faces four counts each of robbery and forcible confinement.

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Comics go to war on Yonge

Six Toronto comics are duking it out in a comedy battle that draws its line down Yonge Street — three from the east side, three from the west side. The comics are Ryan Dillon, Danish Anwar, Mark DeBonis, Christophe Davidson, Dom Pare and Amanda Day.

STEVE RUSSELL/TORONTO STAR

$300K in damage blamed on student

Thorlea basketball. Players took part in tournament in Windsor, causing a flood and significant damage to the hotel

A player on Thornlea Secondary School's senior basketball team set off a hotel room sprinkler while the team was in Windsor for a tournament, causing a flood and "significant" damage unofficially estimated at about $300,000.

"One of the boys was looking for a place to dry an article of clothing — he hung it on the wall and it turned out to be a sprinkler," said York Region District School Board representative Licinio Miguelo. "It was inadvertent."

Peter Tosh, director of operations for Vrancor Hospitality, which operates the Waterfront Hotel Downtown Windsor, said the alarm system went off on the 12th floor around 2 a.m. on Nov. 29.

"The guest staying in the 12th floor room who can be identified as a 6'2" male, with long dark hair, stated to the hotel's security he was trying to hang a basketball jersey by the sprinkler head when it went off," he said via email.

The sprinkler caused "significant water damage" on that floor and the one below. Tosh said there's no formal estimate at this time, but sources have told Torstar News Services it is around $300,000. Repairs are expected to take several months.

He said there is no evidence the damage was deliberate, and "at this time, the hotel ownership has no plans to pursue a lawsuit."

Parent Joel Lewis, whose Grade 12 son is on the team and whose wife chaperoned the trip, said the player who set off the sprinkler was distraught and screamed for help when water started spraying, awakening his three roommates as well as coaches in nearby rooms.

"The room they were in completely flooded. The four guys in that room — all their clothes and equipment and everything" were soaked, said Lewis. "The floor was flooded, the hallway — everything. My wife was in another room and when she got up, the carpet was all wet.

"The entire floor was flooded from the one room."

Rumours circulating on social media that the teens were horsing around and had "hung" another student from the sprinkler are untrue, and "are causing quite a bit of a problem," added Lewis. "Really, this was 1,000 per cent an accident. The kid, he wasn't thinking … this was a traumatic experience."

Peter Cusumano, who coaches the senior boys basketball at Catholic Central High School in Windsor, was the tournament's convener. He confirmed that Thornlea withdrew after playing two games on Friday, both of which they lost. They had two games scheduled for the Saturday.

He did not wish to comment on the incident.

The Freeds Tournament, for elite teams, took place Nov. 28 and 29, and was won by Toronto's St. Michael's College. Other teams from the area included Pine Ridge Secondary School in Pickering and Oakville's Holy Trinity Catholic Secondary School.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Tokyo Police Club has powerful Forcefield

Danforth Music Hall.
Band to play two nights on heels of third LP

BACKSTAGE PASS
Ian Gormely
scene@metronews.ca

Tokyo Police Club play the first of a two-night stand at the Danforth Music Hall Friday. COURTESY ANDREW STRAPP

By any definition, Tokyo Police Club had a big 2014.

The band released its long-gestating third full-length LP, Forcefield, in the spring, along with an eye-popping video for infectious first single Hot Tonight, then spent most of the year touring and promoting the record. It even managed to play Hawaii for the first time, a highlight for group frontman David Monks.

But, Monks says, Forcefield failed to live up to the lofty ambitions the band set for itself at the beginning of the year.

"Everyone's throwing these albums into the Internet ocean and I wanted to throw a really big stone and make a big splash," he says. "It didn't work the way we wanted it to work."

Monks' comments reflect the drive that's helped elevate Tokyo Police Club from its humble beginnings in Newmarket to international success. Pushing further into the U.S., where the band already has an established fan base, was a major goal for 2014. "We always want to shoot farther and get more people to listen to our band. It's what drives us."

Even if things didn't work out to the letter, Monks says he has few complaints, as he and bandmates Graham Wright, Josh Hook and Greg Alsop ready a two-night hometown stand at the Danforth Music Hall.

"Morale is high," he jokes. "The future is exciting!"

The Danforth gigs are part of a cross-country tour with Vancouver's Said the Whale, based on a handshake agreement that also saw the two bands tour the States together.

With 2014 coming to a close, Tokyo Police Club is already looking for ways to release new music in the new year. "An album feels secondary to songs and action," Monks says, noting the four-year gap between Forcefield and its predecessor, Champ. "It's about doing things constantly as opposed to working on that one masterpiece."

Tokyo Police Club plays the Danforth Music Hall Thursday and Friday.

Also playing

Four-band bill, boy

Tokyo Police Club is just the tip of the iceberg on this four-band bill stacked with Canadian indie rockers.

- **Said the Whale**: Stars in their own right, the members of this Vancouver band blend folk and indie rock into ridiculously catchy singles and soaring paeans to their hometown. (Both nights)
- **The Pack A.D.**: No stranger to Toronto, this Vancouver duo delivers slabs of bluesy garage rock fuzz à la the White Stripes and Black Keys. (Friday only)
- **Dilly Dally**: Featuring Monks' sister Katie, this local four-piece, signed to Buzz Records, blend the sneer of L7 with the Pixies' penchant for fuzzy melodic hooks. (Thursday only)

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Oil tanker adrift off Nova Scotia coast

An oil tanker carrying 675,000 barrels of crude oil was drifting Wednesday off the coast of Nova Scotia after losing its steering.

A spokesman for Teekay Corp., the ship's owner, said the Australian Spirit started having problems Tuesday evening.

Jonathan Anthony said the tanker was about 70 kilometres southeast of Halifax early Wednesday afternoon and it wasn't near any other ships.

One tugboat, the Atlantic Larch, had reached the vessel and another tugboat that is capable of towing the tanker was expected to arrive by the evening, he said.

"The crew and cargo are safe … We obviously take it very seriously, but there's no imminent danger," he said in an interview from Vancouver.

Keith Laidlaw, an environmental response officer with the coast guard, said if the steering can't be fixed then the tugs will make a towing plan to bring the tanker into harbour for repairs.

'No imminent danger'

"The crew and cargo are safe … We obviously take it very seriously, but there's no imminent danger."

Jonathan Anthony, Teekay Corp spokesman

The vessel was not in danger of breaking up and its drift towards shore had slowed as seas calmed, he said, adding that if the ship is towed that wouldn't begin until Thursday morning.

Laidlaw said the vessel's towing plan would have to be approved by Transport Canada. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Sandbags are placed along the shores of Locarno Beach in Vancouver on Wednesday. Severe rains along with a rare king tide are threatening homes in low-lying areas. JONATHAN HAYWARD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

B.C. readies for heavy weather

Vancouver area and Vancouver Island.

Some cities have called a state of emergency as flooding expected

Some 30,000 sandbags line a stretch of low-lying waterfront land in Vancouver, placed by city workers, in a bid to protect local homes from an anticipated king tide.

The task was completed by about 45 workers in advance of Wednesday's forecasted weather event, which could coincide with the same type of high winds and heavy rains that have already cut power to thousands of residents across the south coast and flooded streets.

In the Vancouver Island city of Courtenay, for example, municipal leaders declared a state of emergency because of flooding that has closed roads, facilities and parks. The city has asked about two dozen residents to leave a mobile-home park.

A local state of emergency was also declared in part of Tsawwassen where, Delta mayor Lois Jackson said, a section of seawall about 70 feet long has collapsed.

Jackson said the collapse has opened that entire area to the sea.

George Harvie of Delta's engineering department said a house near the wall has been evacuated and crews hope barriers they have erected are strong enough to hold.

Considering the time of year, though, the powerful weather like king tides is not completely unanticipated.

The B.C. Ministry of Environment website reports they occur about twice a year, are typically more dramatic in the winter, and occur when the sun and moon's gravitational forces reinforce each other, and the moon is closest to the earth.

Brian Crowe, a spokesman for the City of Vancouver's engineering department, said king tides can approach five metres in elevation, or about one metre higher than a typical high tide, and can form storm surges when they are combined with low-pressure systems.

He said Wednesday's king tide is forecast for 5.5 metres, which is the same elevation of water that flooded Locarno Beach Park on the city's waterfront in 2012, but not nearby homes.

Batten down the hatches

5.5m

The height of the king tide anticipated for Wednesday.

"We have sandbagged about 200 metres in the lowest area along Marine Drive adjacent to the park to ensure the water can't get past the edge of the park into the neighbourhood," he said.

"This is a proactive move. We don't actually believe the water will be high enough tomorrow to cross the street, but we have high tides happening periodically through the Christmas season until early in January."

A frontal system is expected to approach the region overnight, and Environment Canada says it could bring as much as 50 millimetres of rain to the east coast of Vancouver Island and Metro Vancouver's North Shore mountains.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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NE122G514

Hungry polar bears. Six cubs shot in remote Arctic

Residents in a remote Arctic hamlet are baffled and saddened by the number of hungry polar bear cubs that have wandered into their community since the fall and have had to be shot.

Six bears have been spotted in the Nunavut community of Taloyoak since late September, said Bob Lyall, who works with the local Hunters and Trappers Organization.

"They're scavenging," he said Wednesday. "They're nothing to fool with. It's a scary situation when it happens."

Taloyoak is used to polar bears and has an annual hunting quota of 25. The six kills since September will come off that quota.

But Lyall said no hunter is happy about having to kill a cub. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Large bears

Bob Lyall says one of the bears scavenging for food was over two metres long.

- One was spotted in town just as children in school were about to be let out for recess.

Yukon

Dogs plus matches can equal house fire

A couple of dogs likely started a house fire by chewing or playing with a box of matches, the Yukon's fire marshal says.

Dennis Berry is warning against leaving matches where pets can get them.

An investigation determined the fire started in or beside the dogs' bed, and the source of ignition was likely the "strike anywhere" matches, he said.

The pooches escaped through a doggy door. Berry said there was smoke damage to the one-storey residence. THE CANADIAN PRESS

No more business as usual for First Nations: AFN chief

National chief Perry Bellegarde speaks after being elected on the first ballot at the Assembly of First Nations Election in Winnipeg on Wednesday.

TREVOR HAGAN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Pipelines, energy. Bellegarde pledges opposition to projects that deny First Nation fair share of profits

The new national chief of the Assembly of First Nations is warning it will no longer be business as usual when it comes to development on First Nations land.

In a fiery speech to assembly delegates in Winnipeg on Wednesday, Saskatchewan's Perry Bellegarde singled out pipelines and energy development as one of the frontlines in his battle to put First Nations on equal footing with the rest of Canada.

"To the people across this great land, I say to you that the values of fairness and tolerance which Canada exports to the world are a lie when it comes to our people," Bellegarde said.

"Canada will no longer develop pipelines, no longer develop transmission lines, or any infrastructure, on our lands as business as usual.

"That is not on."

He pledged opposition to any project that deprives First Nations a share of the profits.

"We will no longer accept poverty and hopelessness while resource companies and governments grow fat off our lands and territories and resources," he said.

Bellegarde, who was until Wednesday chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, took 63 per cent of the 464 first-ballot votes cast, more than the 60 per cent required for victory.

He told reporters the assembly under his leadership will "be respectful, it's going to be responsive and it's going to be relevant to First Nations people." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"Canada is Indian land."

Perry Bellegarde, newly elected national chief of the Assembly of First Nations

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Unspent funds

Vets' needs called hard to forecast

The inability of Veterans Affairs to spend $1.13 billion over the last eight years should have come as no surprise to the Harper government, which was warned two years ago that the department was struggling to forecast the future needs of its clients.

Veterans Affairs Minister Julian Fantino and Prime Minister Stephen Harper say it's impossible to know how many veterans and their families will request death and disability benefits in any given year.

Auditor general Michael Ferguson's fall 2012 report warned that Veterans Affairs was producing forecasts of future client needs that were based on historic data, rather than current information. THE CANADIAN PRESS

17 years later

U.S. may join landmine ban

The Canadian foreign minister who was a driving force behind a groundbreaking treaty to ban landmines 17 years ago says he sees encouraging signs that the United States will finally sign on.

Former Liberal foreign minister Lloyd Axworthy says American support would be a major boost to the treaty, which the U.S. and three dozen other countries have snubbed since it was signed in Ottawa in 1997.

This week Secretary of State John Kerry said his country was going to look at joining the Ottawa Convention, which has more than 160 member countries. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Halifax Regional Police Const. Stacey Opalka snaps a selfie with Destiny Galant and Santa during the 10th annual CopShop event on Wednesday.

Cops shop for a cause

Holiday spirit. Annual CopShop event in Halifax helps kids discover that police are real people

Destiny Galant skips down one of the aisles of Sport Chek, passing display shelves stacked with boxes of winter boots.

"What about these?" Const. Stacey Opalka asks the nine-year-old, pointing to a child-sized Sorel boot.

"No," Destiny replies.

"What about these?" Opalka asks again, picking up a similar boot a few feet down.

"No," the nine-year-old says again, arriving at the store's shoe wall, reaching to grab a woman's black UGG boot priced at $197.98, calling out, "Stacey, these."

Opalka, shaking her head, smiles. "She's got good taste, though."

A group of 50 Halifax Regional Police officers traded in their blue hats for reindeer antlers and elf ears as they played personal shoppers to 52 children Wednesday morning for the 10th annual CopShop at the Halifax Shopping Centre.

The annual event gave each child a $200 gift certificate to the mall and a stocking filled with goodies from Old Saint Nick, as well as a winter coat from Sport Chek.

Besides helping the children get into the holiday spirit, one spokeswoman from the mall explained the event is a chance to teach kids that police officers are actually real people.

"It lets them see (cops) as not only stoic police officers, but also warm, cuddly teddy bears, too." Stephanie Schnare said Wednesday.

For the first time this year, Schnare said, the mall handed out an extra $10 gift certificate for the children to buy a toy to later donate to a family in need.

After assisting Destiny to try on a cheetah-print jacket, with black, white, pink and purple spots, Opalka and her partner, Const. Chris DeLong — affectionally deemed "butler" by Destiny — were next tasked with finding her boots.

"Are those boots made for walking?" Opalka asked, as Destiny strutted around wearing a new pair of black and purple high-top Sorels.

Before bolting to the checkout counter with her new boots, Destiny handed DeLong her new jacket.

"Here, am I carrying that too?" he asked, already carrying the nine-year-old's stocking, wish list and can of root beer.

"Hurry up, butler," Destiny yelled back, laughing. STEPHANIE TAYLOR/FOR METRO IN HALIFAX

Quoted

"This (event) allows us to see the true spirit of Christmas."
Stephanie Schnare of the Halifax Shopping Centre

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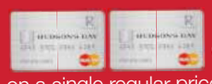

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A hockey legend remembered

Pallbearers and former Montreal Canadiens teammates (clockwise from back left: Guy Lafleur, Jean-Guy Talbot, Robert Rousseau, Serge Savard, Yvan Cournoyer and Phil Goyette) carry the casket as family members walk behind after the funeral service for Canadiens legend Jean Béliveau on Wednesday in Montreal.

PAUL CHIASSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada will act on tips from torture: Official

Intelligence information. A spokesman for Public Safety Minister Steven Blaney said that the government will act on 'a tip from any source'

Quoted

"The primary responsibility of Canadian security agencies is to protect Canadian life and property."

Jean-Christophe de Le Rue, spokesman for Public Safety Minister Stephen Blaney

The federal Conservatives say they don't condone the use of torture, but will continue to act on intelligence when "Canadians' lives are in danger."

A spokesman for Public Safety Minister Steven Blaney's office said Wednesday that Canada does not engage in, nor condone, torture by national security agencies.

But Jean-Christophe de Le Rue said that Canada will act on "a tip from any source" if Canadians' lives are in danger.

"The primary responsibility of Canadian security agencies is to protect Canadian life and property," de Le Rue wrote in a prepared statement. "We will continue to ensure that intelligence is reviewed and assessed by Canadian intelligence experts before it is acted upon."

Opposition critics are calling on the Conservative government to take away Canadian security agencies' ability to send or request information to foreign partners that could lead to torture.

The calls come a day after the U.S. Senate revealed the CIA misled its political masters about how widespread and brutal the Bush-era practice of "enhanced interrogation techniques" of detainees was.

The report detailed the conditions imposed on detainees in CIA black sites across the world. Techniques used by American agents and contractors included forcing detainees to stand on broken legs, forced rectal feeding and frequent waterboarding (simulated drowning).

Five Canadian security agencies can use national security information from foreign partners, even if it was obtained through torture. According to documents obtained by The Canadian Press, the head of the agency must weigh several factors before approving the information sharing — including the opinion of Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird's department.

Speaking earlier Wednesday, Baird refused to address questions about domestic agencies' use of information gained from CIA torture.

"Canada doesn't torture anyone. Period. Period," Baird said after a news conference.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

FOR MORE COVERAGE ON THE U.S. TORTURE REPORT, SEE PAGE 34.

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Malala receives her Nobel Peace Prize

Speaks out. Pakistani teenage girl survived Taliban assassination attempt for her education activism

The Pakistani teenager stood on the stage of Oslo City Hall as the youngest Nobel Peace laureate, smiling as she listened to the thunderous ovation.

Now, everybody knows: She is Malala.

Shot in the head by the Taliban two years ago for speaking out on education, 17-year-old Malala Yousafzai on Wednesday beamed as she received the Nobel Peace Prize and taught a lesson in courage.

"I had two options. One was to remain silent and wait to be killed. And the second was to speak up and then be killed. I chose the second one. I decided to speak up," Malala said.

And with that, Malala proved that teenagers could tell the elders a thing or two. Anyone who hadn't read her memoir, "I am Malala," was about to get an education.

She adjusted her coral pink headscarf and made no effort to hide any scars that might remain from the attack.

She thanked her parents for unconditional love and then humbly suggested that she was somehow not all that special — just a girl who fights with her brothers and who wanted to learn above all else.

"As far as I know, I am just a committed and even stubborn person who wants to see every child getting quality education, who wants to see women having equal rights and who wants peace in every corner of the world," she said.

"Education is one of the blessings of life, and one of its necessities."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Pistorius trial may be appealed

Oscar Pistorius again faces the possibility of a murder conviction after a South African judge ruled Wednesday that prosecutors can appeal against the double-amputee Olympian's conviction on the lesser charge of culpable homicide.

Pistorius could face a minimum of 15 years in prison if the appeals court overturns his conviction and raises it to murder.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pause in fighting

East Ukraine ceasefire holds

Ukraine will continue upholding a truce with Russian-backed separatists following a day largely free of exchanges of fire between the warring sides, a military spokesman in Kyiv said Wednesday.

Both the government and rebels have accused each other of sporadic violations of the truce that began Tuesday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hong Kong. Protesters to resist removal from camp

Hong Kong student protest leaders vowed Wednesday to stay until the last minute and peacefully resist a police operation to clear them off a highway where they've been camped out for 2-1/2 months.

Thousands of protesters and supporters streamed into the site on the last night of what's come to be known as the "Umbrella Movement," named for the pro-democracy protesters' preferred method of deflecting police pepper spray.

Many huddled in the hundreds of tents that remained on the thoroughfare outside the specially administered Chinese city's government headquarters, less than a day before court workers assisted by police were scheduled to sweep them out. Others took photos, listened to speeches and lined up for souvenir leather bracelets and other mementos handmade on the spot by volunteers.

"We will still resist till the last moment," said Alex Chow, secretary-general of the Hong Kong Federation of Students. He said the reason for staying until the end is "not simply for us be arrested, but to demonstrate our spirit" of civil disobedience.

Authorities will start by removing barricades and other obstructions from three sections of road covered by a court order. Then, they will clear other nearby blocked roads to reopen the entire area to traffic. Anyone who refuses to leave will be arrested, police said.

While some had already packed up their belongings on Wednesday, many promised it would not be the end of the pro-democracy movement, using large yellow banners, chalk scrawled on asphalt or balloon letters stuck on a wall to declare "We'll be back."

The protesters reject Beijing's restrictions on the first election for the city's top leader, scheduled for 2017, but have failed to win any concessions from Hong Kong's government. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Protesters gather at the occupied area outside government headquarters in Hong Kong on Wednesday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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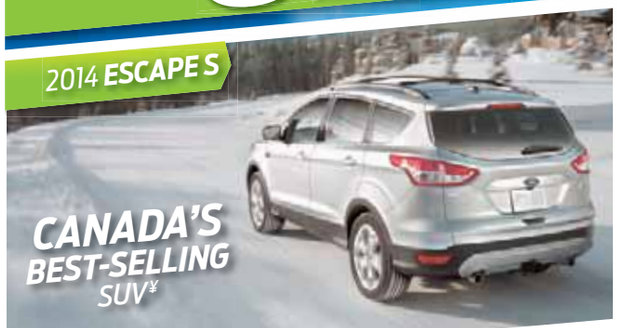

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Kid claps to Hitler sketch

Nazi imagery botches Thai military rulers' film

The short propaganda film commissioned by Thailand's military rulers was supposed to promote the "12 core values" every Thai student must now learn. But there was one scene the junta has had trouble explaining: a grinning schoolboy painting an image of Adolf Hitler while his smiling classmate applauds.

The video, which has been screened before movies in major theatres since Saturday, has been met with ridicule on social media and condemned by the Israeli Embassy in Bangkok.

On Wednesday, a senior official in the prime minister's office, Panadda Diskul, called the uproar a "misunderstanding," but said the Nazi imagery in the scene would be replaced. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Poland's ex-leader

Walesa lands in same hospital as communist general

Poland's former democracy leader Lech Walesa has broken his leg — and landed in the same as a communist-era official involved in directing the 1981 crackdown that put Walesa in jail.

Walesa, 71, the founder of the Solidarity trade union and a former president of Poland, broke his right leg on Tuesday while leaving a church in his hometown of Gdansk.

A photo he posted on his blog shows Walesa in his hospital bed with his broken leg raised and in a cast.

Polish media on Wednesday highlighted the irony of him being in the same Gdansk hospital as Gen. Czeslaw Kiszczak, who as interior minister in 1981 played a key role in imposing martial law. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Humpbacks heart N.Y.

Approaching the city. More whales seen just off New York City than anyone can remember

Humpback whales, the gigantic, endangered mammals known for their haunting underwater songs, have been approaching New York City in greater numbers than even old sea captains can remember.

Naturalists aboard whale-watching boats have seen humpbacks in the Atlantic Ocean within a mile of the Rockaway peninsula, part of New York's borough of Queens, within sight of Manhattan's skyscrapers.

"It is truly remarkable, within miles of the Empire State Building, to have one of the largest and most charismatic species ever to be on this planet," said Howard Rosenbaum, director of the Ocean Giants program at the Wildlife Conservation Society.

Humpbacks were spotted 87 times from the boats this year, and by cataloging the whales' markings, at least 19 different humpbacks have been identified in the waters off the city.

Paul Sieswerda, founder of Gotham Whale, which documents the marine mammal population around New York, said reports of humpbacks in the New York Bight, where the city's harbour meets the Atlantic, began to pick up around 2010 from surprised fishermen and other veterans on the water.

"It was pretty slim pickings at first, actually," Sieswerda said.

It's not crystal clear why humpbacks, which can be 15 metres long and weigh 40 tons, are returning to New York's shores, where they were abundant before they and other whale species were nearly destroyed by whaling. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Just visiting

Many whales have been sighted more than once.

- **106 sightings.** 15 in 2012, 33 in 2013 and 87 in 2014 so far.
- **Flukes.** Shapes and markings in their tails, known as flukes, help document different whales. So far, 19 whales made the New York City Humpback Whale Catalog.

A humpback whale breaks just off the Rockaway peninsula near New York City. Humpbacks have been approaching the city in greater numbers than in many years. GOTHAM WHALE/DENNIS GUINEY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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In this photo taken Monday, Dec. 1, 2014, keeper Mohamed Doyo pats female northern white rhino Najin in her pen, where she is being kept for observation at the Ol Pejeta Conservancy in Kenya. BEN CURTIS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

On the brink of extinction

Kenya. Natural reproduction fails for three of the world's six remaining northern white rhinos

Last chance

"The fact they haven't bred is clearly a massive disappointment, but there are new technologies being invented all the time to rescue technically extinct species."

Richard Vigne chief executive of the Ol Pejeta Conservancy suggests in vitro fertilization techniques could resurrect the northern white rhino.

The task was never going to be easy: Fly four highly endangered rhinos from a Czech Republic zoo to East Africa, drive them to the savannah grasses of Mount Kenya and hope that the natural environment helps produce a calf, staving off extinction.

The experiment has all but failed.

The keepers of three northern white rhinos in Kenya — half of the world's remaining rhinos of that species — have begun saying publicly for the first time that their one male and two female rhinos will certainly not reproduce naturally.

The silver lining, though, is science. Efforts will now be made to keep the species alive through in-vitro fertilization, and possibly by working with the rhinos' genetic material in a budding field known as de-extinction.

"We always knew from the very beginning that the chances of this working were small even if they bred," said Richard Vigne, chief executive of the Ol Pejeta Conservancy, where the rhinos have lived since 2009.

The conservancy said in a statement Wednesday that artificial reproductive techniques "could provide the last chance of survival for the world's most endangered mammal."

That echoed the phrase written on the wooden crates the rhinos were transported in from Nairobi to Ol Pejeta: "Last Chance to Survive."

Some animal experts at the time said the effort was too little, too late, and that the experiment's budget could have been better spent on other conservation projects.

But the bulk of the more than $100,000 effort came from a donor — Alastair Lucas, then the vice chairman of Goldman Sachs in Australia — who wanted to see the project carried out.

Vigne said the project was not done in vain.

"They've been returned to Africa from a zoo, and they've thrived in that environment. In that way it's been a success," he said. "The fact they haven't bred is clearly a massive disappointment, but there are new technologies being invented all the time to rescue technically extinct species."

One of the two male rhinos transferred to Ol Pejeta died of an unknown cause earlier this year. Veterinarians that examined the remaining three last month determined that the male's sperm count is very low and that the two females either cannot get pregnant or cannot carry a pregnancy to term.

The in-vitro fertilization experiment could take place with a southern white surrogate mother. In addition, Vigne said scientists are working with old genetic material to see if they can resurrect the passenger pigeon or dodo bird. By contrast, he noted that the genetic material from northern whites is still alive.

The northern white rhino is a major mammalian species that is "probably or potentially" going to become extinct in the coming years, Vigne said, notwithstanding new reproductive technology.

"And to me that's a real indictment of the human race," he said. "We're all responsible for it, and to stand by and watch it happen … I think would have been horribly wrong."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Cabinet minister dies after protest

Palestinian official. Succumbs after scuffle with Israeli troops

A Palestinian cabinet member died Wednesday shortly after he and other protesters scuffled with Israeli troops near a West Bank village. The forces also fired tear gas close to the demonstrators, witnesses said.

During the scuffle, a member of Israel's security forces held Ziad Abu Ain, 55, by the neck. He collapsed, received first aid and died en route to a hospital, witnesses said.

What killed the Palestinian official remains unclear. His body will undergo an autopsy by Palestinian, Jordanian and Israeli pathologists, the Israeli army said. Abu Ain is the first Palestinian cabinet member to die immediately after a protest.

Later Wednesday, a 12-year-old Palestinian boy was shot in the head and seriously wounded in a confrontation with Israeli soldiers in the nearby Jalazoun refugee camp, said Ahmed Bitawi, the head of Ramallah Hospital.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Israel's defence minister

Obama not 'around forever'

U.S. criticism of Israel's settlements has slowed down construction in the West Bank, Israel's defence minister said Wednesday; he hopes it's "temporary" because the Obama administration "won't be around forever." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mourners of Palestinian cabinet member Ziad Abu Ain carry posters with his picture at the main hospital in the West Bank city of Ramallah, Wednesday. Abu Ain died shortly after a protest in the village of Turmus Aya, near Ramallah, during which witnesses said Israeli troops fired tear gas at him and dozens of Palestinian marchers. Witnesses also said Abu Ain was beaten by an Israeli soldier. NASSER NASSER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Torture report. CIA fights to write historical record

Top spies past and present campaigned Wednesday to discredit the Senate's investigation into the CIA's harrowing torture practices after Sept. 11, 2001, battling to define the historical record and deter potential legal action around the world.

The Senate intelligence committee's report doesn't urge prosecution for wrongdoing, and the Justice Department has no interest in reopening a criminal probe. But the threat to former interrogators and their superiors was underlined as a UN special investigator demanded those responsible for "systematic crimes" be brought to justice, and human rights groups pushed for the arrest of key CIA and Bush administration figures if they travel overseas.

Current and former CIA officials pushed back, determined to paint the Senate report as a political stunt by Senate Democrats tarnishing a program that saved American lives. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Zacarias Moussaoui

'20th hijacker' asks for transfer to Guantanamo Bay

An imprisoned man known as the "20th hijacker" in the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks asked a South Florida federal judge Wednesday for a transfer to the military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where several alleged senior terror plotters are awaiting trial.

The request is part of two rambling, handwritten letters filed in Miami federal court by Zacarias Moussaoui. He is serving a life prison sentence after pleading guilty in 2005 to conspiring with the 19 hijackers in the attacks.

Moussaoui signed one letter as the "so-call 20th hijacker" and a "Slave to Allah." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Report casts new shadow over Zero Dark Thirty film

Story of hunt for Osama bin Laden.
Made with rare blend of traditional filmmaking and journalism

The damning Senate Intelligence Committee report on post-9/11 interrogation techniques has cast a new pall over the 2012 film Zero Dark Thirty.

Kathryn Bigelow's docudrama about the hunt for Osama bin Laden ignited controversy for implying that the "enhanced" interrogation techniques of the detainee program helped lead to finding bin Laden. Bigelow claimed that torture was a part of the story that couldn't be ignored.

The Senate report released Tuesday found that the coercive techniques led to no unique intelligence, a conclusion that seemed to debunk, officially, part of the narrative suggested by Zero Dark Thirty.

California Sen. Diane Feinstein, the Democratic chair of the Intelligence Committee that released the report, had been one of the most vocal critics of Zero Dark Thirty. In a 2012 letter to Sony Pictures co-signed by Republican Sen. John McCain, Feinstein called the film "factually inaccurate" and wrote that filmmakers had an obligation not to "shape American public opinion in a disturbing and misleading manner."

Bigelow was asked about the report on The Daily Show on Tuesday while promoting a short film about elephant poaching and the ivory trade.

"We made the movie based on the reporting that we did," said Bigelow. "I applaud transparency in government, so I think it's good that it's out there." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"It's complicated. It's very, very, very complicated."

Kathryn Bigelow, director of Zero Dark Thirty

Director Kathryn Bigelow attends the 86th Annual Academy Awards Oscar Foreign Language Reception at LACMA on Feb. 28 in Los Angeles, Calif.
VALERIE MACON/GETTY IMAGES

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Scientists forced to rethink origin of Earth's water; likely not comets

Too heavy. European space probe finds wrong kind of water in duck-shaped comet

The image composed of four images taken with the navigation camera on Rosetta shows comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko on Nov. 17, 2014 from a distance of 42 km from the centre of the comet. The mystery of where Earth's water came from has gotten murkier, with astronomers essentially eliminating comets. ESA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The mystery of where Earth's water came from got murkier Wednesday, when some astronomers essentially eliminated one of the chief suspects: comets.

Over the past few months, the European Space Agency's Rosetta space probe closely examined the type of comet that some scientists theorized could have brought water to our planet four billion years ago. It did find water, but the wrong kind.

It was too heavy. One of the first scientific studies from the Rosetta mission found that the comet's water contains more of a hydrogen isotope called deuterium than water on Earth does.

"The question is (what) brought this water: Was it comets, or was it something else?" asked Kathrin Altwegg of the University of Bern in Switzerland, lead author of a study published in the journal Science.

Something else, probably asteroids, Altwegg concluded. But others disagree.

Many scientists have long believed Earth had water when it first formed, but it boiled off, so the water on the planet now had to come from an outside source.

University of Maryland astronomer Michael A'Hearn, who wasn't part of the research, called the results startling but said they don't eliminate comets altogether. The water could have come from other types of comets, he said.

NASA Near Earth Object program manager Donald Yeomans, however, thinks it does rule out comets.

While asteroids are a good suspect — they probably had more water on them 4 billion years ago than they do now — another possibility is that Earth kept some of its original water in its crust or in ice at the poles, Altwegg said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

More questions

Comet science

The findings from Rosetta's mission to the duck-shaped comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko complicate not just the question of the origin of Earth's water but our understanding of comets.

Until now, scientists pretty much sorted comets into two types: near (from around Neptune and Pluto) and far. Rosetta's visit shows that near comets aren't as uniform as thought, and it once again complicates the issue of Earth's water.

"That probably rules out Kuiper Belt comets from bringing water to Earth," she said.

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Video-game makers face industry crunch

Rush to market. Ubisoft's recent Assassin's Creed Unity game highlights the industry's 'ship now, fix later' trend

The video-game industry is raking in record profits, but many developers are facing criticism as recent big-budget releases have been rushed to market with technical problems.

Ubisoft CEO Yannis Mallat issued a mea culpa earlier this month for the November release of Assassin's Creed Unity, acknowledging that the overall quality of the game "was diminished by bugs and unexpected technical issues."

The company — which has development offices in Toronto and Montreal that employ more than 2,000 people — intends to offer free downloadable content or a free game for those who bought the product before it was patched with a software update.

Quoted

"People need to understand that things that are built well take time."

Brendan Frye, editor-in-chief of Canadian video game publication CG magazine.

Toronto-based syndicated video-game critic Marc Saltzman notes a disturbing "ship now, fix later" trend, where developers take advantage of customers' Internet bandwidth to repair a game after its release.

With more than 40 per cent of games released in November and December, Saltzman says many companies set unrealistic deadlines ahead of the holidays.

When a game is delayed or isn't up to snuff, reaction can be swift.

"With social media it's so fast to disseminate information, and if there's some bad experiences these companies could be shooting themselves (in the foot)," says Saltzman.

The Witcher 3, another highly anticipated 2015 release from Polish video game developer CD Projekt RED, was delayed from this fall to May 19, 2015.

"These companies have so many people to answer to that when things are delayed they are the ones that suffer. Their investors get upset, their stock prices fall and the public themselves turn on them pretty quickly," says Brendan Frye, editor-in-chief of Canadian video game publication CG Magazine.

"These issues are going to persist unless consumers start demanding (developers) do make the change, take the time to finish it, and people have to understand that things that are built well take time."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Community building blocks

Huxley Briggs uses a sander in his father's workshop at their home in Whitehorse, Yukon. Briggs was just tall enough to see over the counter, but that didn't throw the five-year-old off his pitch to sell 10 of his Yukon-wood building-block sets to a Yukon toy store for $10. The rectangles and wedges came nicely packaged in plastic with a label in his own printing that read, "Huxley's Block Company." The sets sold out in one day. Many of the blocks were made by Huxley himself using power tools. The store is selling the blocks for $20 each and is donating the profit to Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Yukon, the family's charity of choice. HANDOUT/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canadian real estate

Gaining strength

The Bank of Canada says house prices may be overvalued by up to 30 per cent, but governor Stephen Poloz says the real-estate market is headed for a soft landing.

"We believe the economy is gathering strength, it's beginning to rebuild itself, it's going to create new jobs and income is going to go up," Poloz said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Market Minute

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Grumpy feline love

Cat books for the holidays. There is no shortage of good reads to buy for the cat lover in your life this Christmas season

The felines are fighting back — on the bookshelf.

For the cat lovers on your holiday list, several books challenge the notion that pooches get more play. Here are three gift-worthy books about cats.

A Letter to My Cat

Actress Rosanna Arquette, model Kathy Ireland and animal behaviourist Jackson Galaxy of My Cat From Hell are among the celebrities who pen love notes to their cats in this collection.

"The kitten was never going to walk," said Dr. Betsy Kennon. "I can't tell you why I didn't put him to sleep."

As the cat struggled to pull himself along, one of Kennon's workers stuck a plastic bowl under his rump to help smooth the way. The cat became known as Scooter, and the bowl gave way to a kitty wheelchair.

In the six years since, Kennon and Scooter have visited thousands of patients at hospitals and nursing homes.

Grumpy Cat
LIFETIME/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Grumpy Guide to Life

Leading the pack of popular cat books is one from down-in-the-dumps Grumpy Cat — The Grumpy Guide to Life.

The latest book is full of Grumpy insight such as: "People are like balls of yarn. For the most part, they're boring and useless, but I still get a lot of pleasure out of watching them unravel."

Chicken Soup for the Soul: The Cat Did What?

The leader in heartwarming stories rounds up 101 anecdotes from cat owners.

Contributor Jan Bono writes that a veterinarian told her it's normal for cats to eat plastic but most will quickly grow out of it. After a year and a half, Bono is still waiting.

The book was published in tandem with The Dog Did What? and highlights Chicken Soup for the Soul's work with animals, including donating its brand of dog food to shelters and rescues, publisher and author Amy Newmark said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Telus. IoT solutions software unveiled

Telus is launching an online marketplace for "Internet of Things"-based solutions to help companies take advantage of the emerging technology.

With large growth forecasts, the Internet of Things (IoT) features interconnected devices and is expected to help usher in an age of automation across all industries. Adoption is happening, but slowly, and Telus is betting that an early move into the space will pay dividends later.

"IoT was something that became a strategic decision," said Shawn Sanderson, vice-president of IoT at Telus. He says the new marketplace will let customers quickly search by industry and solution type.

Sanderson says the focus on IoT came out of Telus's existing fleet-management solutions, which are in the new marketplace, as are tech solutions across many sectors, including food service and retail.

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VOICES

ARMING FARE INSPECTORS

Do you want transit workers armed in your city? With the Toronto Transit Commission expanding its proof-of-payment system, so, too, will it be expanding its force of fare inspectors equipped with batons. The TTC says the practice is meant to protect inspectors from belligerent riders, but critics say this sets a bad precedent

Yes

Staff need the right gear to protect them

Brad Ross

Fare inspectors began riding the 501 Queen and 510 Spadina streetcars in August, introducing themselves to customers and explaining the proof-of-payment (POP) concept that requires anyone riding those two lines to show a Metropass or paper transfer if asked by an inspector.

All streetcar routes become POP as the new streetcars are introduced, but the TTC is looking to accelerate that, starting with the 504 King streetcar on Jan. 1.

While fare inspectors are educating and informing customers about POP, they will also be issuing tickets when warranted.

The fine for failing to pay a fare is $235. And while fare inspectors are professional, highly trained and accountable in all they do, there may be instances where our inspectors will be required to defend themselves from someone who objects to being asked for proof-of-payment or is being issued a ticket.

In all such cases, police are called.

As an employer, the TTC has an obligation to ensure its employees have personal protective equipment for the job they're being asked to do.

The TTC understands the concerns around use of force, which is why, in addition to training at a police standard, oversight and accountability are firmly in place should those tools be used improperly.

Brad Ross is a spokesman for the TTC

Collapsible batons such as the ones being issued to the Toronto Transit staff usually have a shaft made of steel, although some lighter-weight models are made from aluminum alloy.
The TTC says that on average, two TTC employees are assaulted a day. In September, for example, a Toronto man was sentenced for assaulting a bus driver in March. The driver asked the man to turn down his music, which the man did, but he then later came back and punched the driver several times in the head and face.
In 2011, a man died after San Francisco police officers shot at him after he ran away during a fare inspection. In 2010, a TTC driver was charged with assaulting a passenger, breaking a window in the process. The driver and passenger allegedly got into a dispute earlier because the passenger did not have his student card.

No

Batons won't solve TTC's problems

Dr. Daniel Bear

The TTC's practice of equipping fare inspectors with batons and handcuffs is troubling. While the spectre of harassment and assault on public transit is a valid concern, providing these tools to inspectors implies they regularly encounter violence and criminality in their work — not a reassuring message to TTC riders.

In a recent news event, neither the TTC nor the Toronto Police Service were able to furnish statistics on the number of criminal incidents that occur on the TTC.

With the decision to introduce what are effectively new powers and weapons into the mix, it would seem best if there was clear evidence of a need.

I would suggest the TTC reconsider the efficacy of armament, as such tools are entirely reactive in nature.

Perhaps more proactive work with passengers to encourage fare compliance, enhanced patrol of TTC vehicles by actual police officers, and a payment confirmation system more advanced than strips of newsprint would be a better route than arming fare inspectors.

Transit users need to feel safe, but they also want to get where they are going. Frankly, that seems to be a much bigger issue in Toronto. Handcuffs and batons won't solve the TTC's problems, and instead set a bad precedent at a time when the rest of Ontario's law enforcement community is becoming more proactive.

Dr. Daniel Bear is a professor in the Community and Justice Studies program at Sheridan College.

Here's a look at how transit authorities arm — or don't arm — their staff around the country and the world

Halifax

Does not have transit police. Transit drivers aren't armed and don't have the authority to make arrests.

Ottawa

OC Transpo Special Constables are designated peace officers and are trained by police to use batons and pepper spray.

Toronto

Similar to police, Toronto's Transit Enforcement Officers can make arrests. Fare inspectors can intervene only if they've seen an offence personally.

Winnipeg

Has six transit inspectors appointed as Special Constables. They do not carry weapons and are not able to make arrests.

Calgary and Edmonton

Transit officials in both cities are armed with batons, pepper spray and handcuffs.

Vancouver

Vancouver's Transit Police carry guns and have the same authority as other police officers.

New York City

The NYPD polices the city's transit system. Officers are armed and have the authority to make arrests.

London, U.K.

Most British Transport police are unarmed. Its special firearms unit, however, does carry guns.

metro

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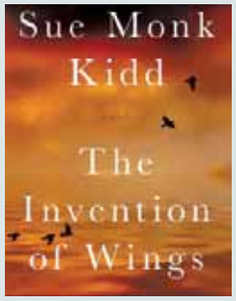
The year's need-to-know books

Here at Metro, it's our solemn duty to spend the year reading all the latest books. Now it's time to present our annual cheat-sheet: We're offering up just enough information to help you sound like you've been reading all year too. These five books came out in 2014, but they'll still be dominating cocktail parties and casual conversation well into 2015. So if you're struggling to make small talk at that significant other's holiday work party, here are some suggestions.

EMILY LAURENCE
Metro in New York City

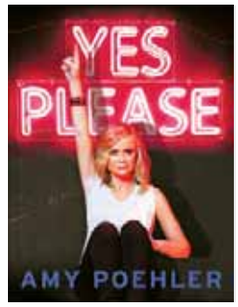


The Invention of Wings

By: Sue Monk Kidd

Two words: Oprah-endorsed. The Secret Life Of Bees author Sue Monk Kidd has another bestseller on her hands with her novel about a reluctant slave owner who forms an unlikely friendship with her slave during the 1800s.

Line to drop at a party: "What's interesting is that the principle character is based on a real champion of the African-American and women's rights movement, yet she's virtually unheard of. It makes me wonder what other women crusaders never made the history books."

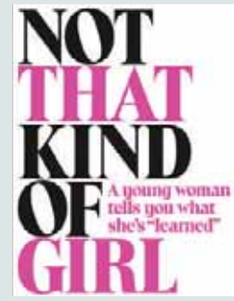


Yes Please

By: Amy Poehler

Everyone is still talking about the Parks and Rec star's memoir, in which she chronicles the path from her early days of comedy to her Saturday Night Live career. She also gets real about her divorce from Will Arnett, past drug use, motherhood and how she feels about entering her 40s.

Line to drop at a party: "Amy is a classy broad. She talks about how heartbroken she was after her divorce without bashing her ex. That takes some epic restraint."

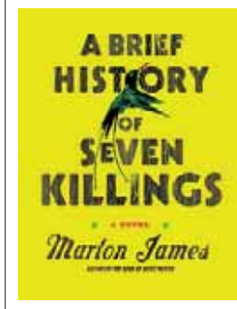


Not That Kind of Girl

By: Lena Dunham

Girls creator and star Lena Dunham dominated blogs with her book of personal essays. There are plenty of gems of wisdom such as, "Being treated like s—t is not an amusing game or a transgressive intellectual experiment. It's something you accept, condone and learn to believe you deserve."

Line to drop at a party: "I wish she talked about her friendships with the Girls cast more, and she only mentions Jack Antoff twice. What gives? Maybe it's harder for her to write about things that make her most happy than the things that give her extreme anxiety."



A Brief History of Seven Killings

By: Marlon James

Using an attempted murder on Bob Marley as a focal point, Marlon James tells the fictional histories of seven gunmen to expose the dangerous Jamaican climate during the '70s, '80s and '90s. Also, the 700-page tome is definitely not brief and it includes many more than seven killings. Just saying.

Line to drop at a party: "James narrates through dozens of different voices, yet it never feels disorganized or disjointed. That's what makes it genius."

All The Light We Cannot See

By: Anthony Doerr

This novel has dual narratives, both set in the Second World War: One is about a blind 16-year-old girl living in France and hoping to escape the bombings, while the other follows a guy named Werner who works for Hitler's side of the war, tasked with tracking down illegal radio transmissions. Their lives inevitably intercept in an anticipated, yet highly enjoyable climax.

Line to drop at a party: "The line 'Open your eyes and see what you can see with them before you close them forever,' changed my entire outlook on life."

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Internet star Zoella had 'help' with book

Novel. Publisher admits YouTube sensation did not pen her record-setting debut

Young British YouTube star Zoella, whose debut novel sold a record number of copies in Britain in its first week, has admitted she had "help" writing the book.

Girl Online became the fastest-selling work by a first-time author in Britain since records began in 1998, selling more than 78,000 copies in seven days when it was published last month.

Zoe Sugg, 24, became a YouTube sensation under the pseudonym Zoella when she started a "vlog," or video blog, in 2009, filled with fashion, beauty and lifestyle tips for young women and girls.

She built up more than six million subscribers and went on to sign a two-book deal with Penguin Random House earlier this year.

Speculation had been mounting, however, that the first book, which tells the story of a teenage blogger and her relationship with a U.S. musician, was ghostwritten.

Responding to the claims on Twitter, Zoella wrote: "Everyone needs help when they try something new. The story and the characters of Girl Online are mine. I want to thank all of you who have taken the time to support the book."

Zoe Sugg a.k.a. Zoella INSTAGRAM PHOTO

A spokesman for publisher Penguin Random House confirmed Monday that "Sugg did not write Girl Online on her own."

"For her first novel, Girl Online, Zoe has worked with an expert editorial team to help her bring to life her characters and experiences in a heartwarming and compelling story," the spokesman said.

Girl Online was an instant hit, outselling the debut offerings of Harry Potter creator J. K. Rowling and Dan Brown, author of the The Da Vinci Code, as well E.L. James' bestseller Fifty Shades of Grey.

Its success even led campaigner Bob Geldof to invite Sugg to sing alongside superstars One Direction and Bono on the Band Aid 30 single released to raise money to combat Ebola.

Rumours started building that Girl Online was not Sugg's own work, however, with The Sunday Times newspaper highlighting similarities with the world of author Siobhan Curham.

In the Girl Online acknowledgements, Sugg thanks "everyone at Penguin for helping me put together my first novel, especially Amy Alward and Siobhan Curham who were with me every step of the way."

Penguin Random House said it was "proud to be have been able to help Zoe tell her story."

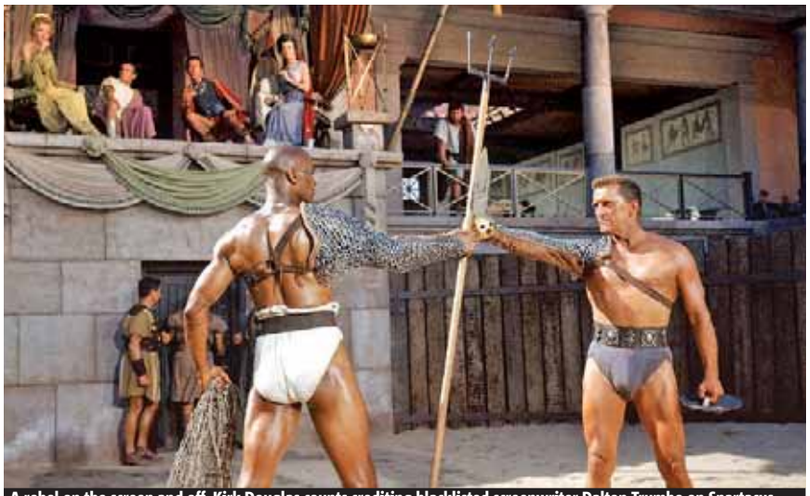
"As publishers our role is, and always has been, to find the very best talent and help them tell their story and connect them with readers," the spokesman added. AFP

Releases

Rowling unveils Christmas gift for Harry Potter fans

British author J.K. Rowling will publish new Harry Potter material every day from Dec. 12 to 23 on her website Pottermore.com as a gift to fans. The author made the announcement on Facebook on Monday, saying the stories will be available each day from 1 p.m. GMT for fans who solve an online riddle. The new material will include "shiny gold Galleons and even a new potion or two," the author said, and the riddles will be written in rhyme. Potter has made a few appearances this year in similar publications by the author but there are no known plans for a new book to follow after the seventh and last volume published in 2007. AFP

J.K. Rowling AFP FILE



A rebel on the screen and off, Kirk Douglas counts crediting blacklisted screenwriter Dalton Trumbo on Spartacus as his most rebellious move. "I was much younger then, and I was much more stubborn," he says. CONTRIBUTED

Kirk Douglas reflects on a life of poetic passion

Life Could Be Verse. Legendary actor, 98, shares poems, essays and photos about his family, career and wife of more than 60 years

Kirk Douglas is done with writing. The rakish screen legend with the famously dimpled chin made that abundantly clear on a recent afternoon at his Beverly Hills home, a few days before the release of his poetry collection Life Could Be Verse: Reflections on Love, Loss, and What Really Matters.

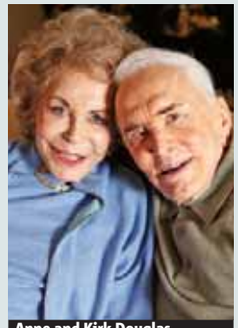
"To me, this is my best book, and my last book," said Douglas, seated next to Anne, his wife of more than 60 years.

It was a pronouncement that came up more than a few times. The Spartacus star, who just turned 98, has 87 films to his name, 11 books, and is one of the last living members of old Hollywood. By now, the world probably thinks it knows Kirk Douglas.

But in some ways, Life Could Be Verse is his most personal work, featuring poems from throughout his life, along with essays and private family photos that help paint a picture of him as a man, a father and husband.

In an industry not known for domestic stability, Kirk and Anne may be one of the greatest Hollywood romances. Seated on a cozy couch in a home that is elegant, modest and lived-in, the couple recalled their first meeting in Paris. He was working on the film Act of Love. She was the publicist.

Romantic ruminations



Anne and Kirk Douglas
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kirk Douglas, who now has 11 books to his name, says writing helps keep him grounded. "We are living in a town of make-believe. I have done about 90 movies. That means that, every time, I was pretending to be someone else. There comes a time in your life when you say, 'Well, who am I?' I have found writing books a good substitute to making pictures. When you write a book, you get to determine what part you are playing."

"I thought she was so beautiful, and I lowered my voice and said, 'Would you like to have dinner?'" he said. "I waited for an answer and she said, 'No, I think I will go home and make some eggs and go to bed.'"

Anne had her own views about transient movie stars. A lot of her friends were going out with actors at the time. "I said to myself, I'm not going to do that," she said.

Then she attended a charity event where actors played the parts of circus performers. Douglas, sporting a tuxedo, decided his talent would be cleaning up after the elephants. "I held on until he picked up the elephant doo," she laughed. "That did it for me."

"Obviously she was looking for a garbage collector," Douglas chimed in.

Still, a cute beginning is hardly noteworthy. Longevity is. "Romance begins at 80, and I ought to know," he said, referencing one of his poems.

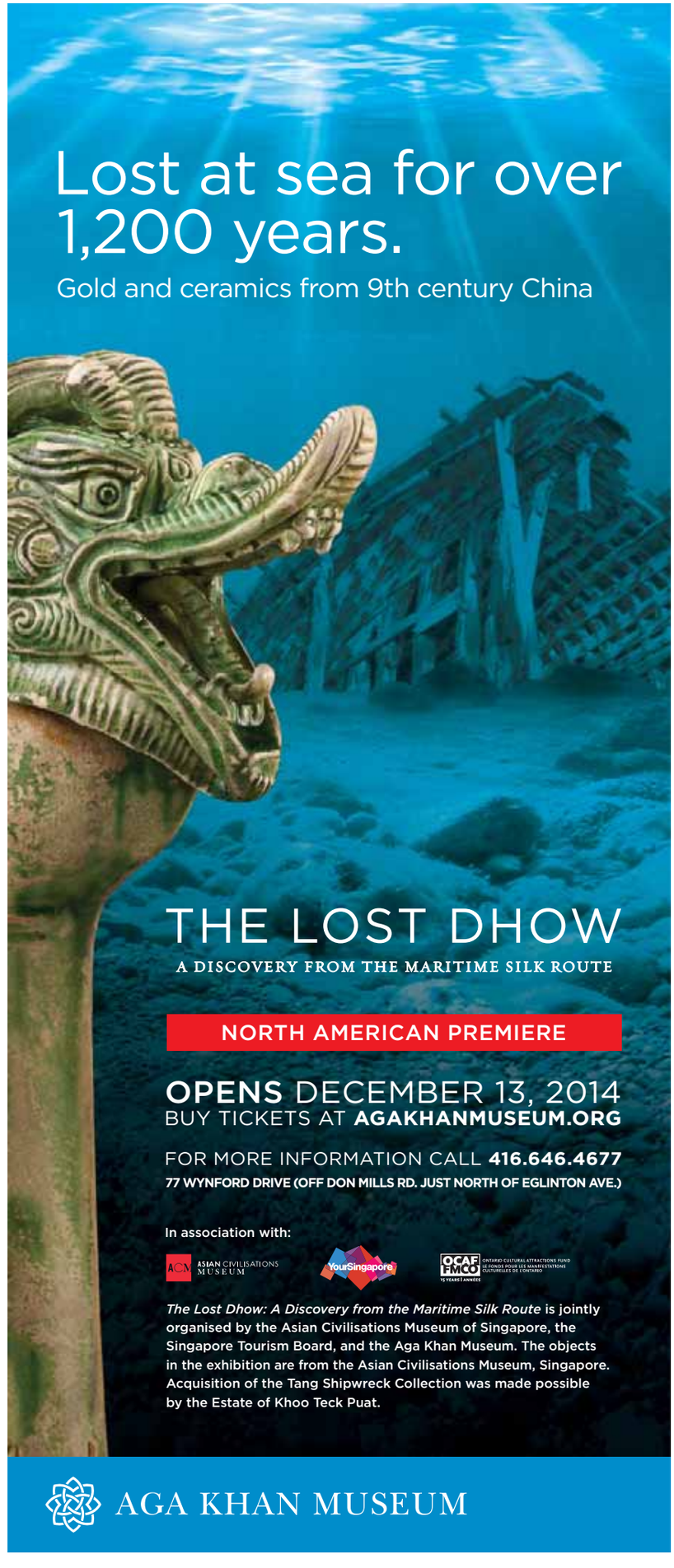
"I'm a romantic guy. You think I'm always shooting guns with John Wayne, but I can be romantic. And, listen, we're sitting here. We have been married for 60 years. A few poems help."

Over the years, the Douglases have devoted themselves to philanthropy. The shared passion has been important for the couple, who have endured tragedy, including his stroke in 1996 and the death of their youngest son, Eric, in 2004.

"Our goal has been, since we're able to do that, to help a little bit and to share what you have with those in need. That has been a very big bond between us," said Anne.

They sold art from their personal collection to help fund various causes, including the restoration of more than 400 playgrounds in the Los Angeles area and the development of a shelter for homeless women downtown. In 2012, the couple pledged $50 million to five charitable organizations.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS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AGA KHAN MUSEUM

Commercial baby food feeds negative desires

Inventing Baby Food. Nutrition professor says early exposure to bland food increases our natural craving for sugar, salt and fat

Where did baby food come from and where has it been? Cultural historian Amy Bentley, mom of three teenagers and an associate professor in the Department of Nutrition, Food Studies and Public Health at New York University, answers that question and more in a sweeping new book tracing how North Americans feed their infants. Her Inventing Baby Food: Taste, Health and the Industrialization of the American Diet, was published in September.

What did families do before baby food came along?
Before the 20th century, the age at which one fed an infant solid food was much later — somewhere between nine and 12 months. The age today is between four and six months. In the 1950s and '60s, it was four to six weeks.

It was thought that you shouldn't feed infants fruits and vegetables until after the age of two. There was a lot of distrust over fruits and vegetables. It harkens back to medieval and earlier theories of the body.

Where do you stand?
I'm not against commercial baby food. The book is a story of the industrialization of food in the United States, and baby food is the case study.

As always there's trade-offs. The industrialization of food helps ensure a supply. It creates a low-cost supply of food so that more people can have more access to food, certainly compared to 300 years ago. Sometimes, that food is not made very well and that affects health and nutrition, but canned food provides convenience.

And that's part of the story of baby food. It provides a convenience for American mothers. It gives them greater mobility. It allows women to go to work.

Mom consumers

The rise of mothers as the main family shopper helped drive demand for baby food. "It's an idea that really comes about in the early 20th century," says author Amy Bentley, "as you get the rise of mass production of goods, advertising, marketing, just a mass proliferation of consumer goods available that weren't before, so a mother's job of nurturer gets inextricably intertwined with a consumer."

How did baby food impact the palates of generations raised on it?
At the mid-20th century, it was made the way all other canned foods were made, with added sugar, salt, preservatives, things that changed the flavour and the vitamin content. That was what it meant to be a good mother, to feed your baby primarily formula and then commercial baby food.

What we're finding now, through research, is that babies learn through taste, and they learn from the get-go. Amniotic fluid is flavoured. Breast milk is flavoured. So infants are emerging already experiencing tastes and flavours. If that exploration and that education through tastes and flavours is muted or limited by monochromatic fluids or bland baby food that has high sugar or salt content, it limits the palate development. It limits the education of a child.

Humans are hardwired to crave sugar, salt and fat. That's evolutionarily one of the ways we've survived.

What is the state of the commercial baby food industry today?
It's still a very viable market but it's declined in percentage points in the past few years. There's been a really interesting surge of small boutique baby food companies, primarily organics, developing new foods, flavours, very much influenced by local food movements… The rise of making one's own baby food is gaining strength.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Maisy, Pete and CC: Fun holiday tales for kids

Young readers. From cats and mice to a Santa for animals and the newest angel, these gift books will entertain children of all ages this Christmas

Looking to keep the kids entertained during long holiday car rides? Tell gift-buying elves to wrap up a book. Among this year's Christmas selections:

Board books

• **Maisy's Christmas Tree, by Lucy Cousins:** Maisy the mouse and pals Cyril and Tallulah prepare for the holiday, from trimming the tree to singing carols. One side of the book is cut out in the shape of a tree, something little ones might appreciate. Candlewick Press, ages two to five.

• **Dinosaur vs. Santa, by Bob Shea:** A smiley little dino wears a bright orange snowsuit, makes gifts for his parents and sneaks downstairs on Christmas Eve only to scurry back to bed due to someone in red ho, ho, hoing. Disney-Hyperion, ages three to five.

Cat lovers

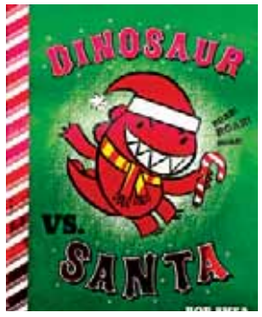
• **Pete the Cat Saves Christmas, created and illustrated by James Dean, story by Eric Litwin:** In this retelling of The Night Before Christmas, the can-do kitty is called upon to deliver gifts when Santa falls ill. The feline's "minibus flew, just like in a movie" and Pete the Cat cried, 'This is totally groovy!'" Harper, ages four to eight.

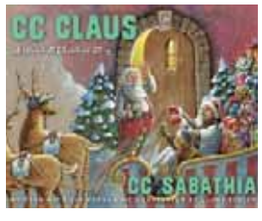
• **Here Comes Santa Cat, by Deborah Underwood, pictures by Claudia Rueda:** There are jet-pack mishaps and dead-fish gifts for children, as a wily but mute cat holding placards on sticks to communicate impersonates Santa Claus to ensure he gets a gift after a particularly naughty year. Dial Books for Young Readers, ages three to five.

Snowy books

• **Blizzard, by John Rocco:** based on Rocco's childhood experience during the blizzard of 1978, when 40 inches of snow fell on his Rhode Island town — from the first flake right before recess to delivering groceries via sled on day six and the arrival of snowplows. Disney-Hyperion, ages three to five.

• **The Animals' Santa, by Jan Brett:** Meticulously drawn forest creatures await the arrival of this special Santa. The animals recall gifts of Christmases past. There was a puzzle for the crows hanging from their tree branch and a brush to fluff his tail for the Arctic fox. A magnificent finish from the beloved Brett with a snowy owl in a starry Santa's cap and a basket full of booty strapped to his breast. G.P. Putnam's Sons, ages three to five.





Christmas spirit

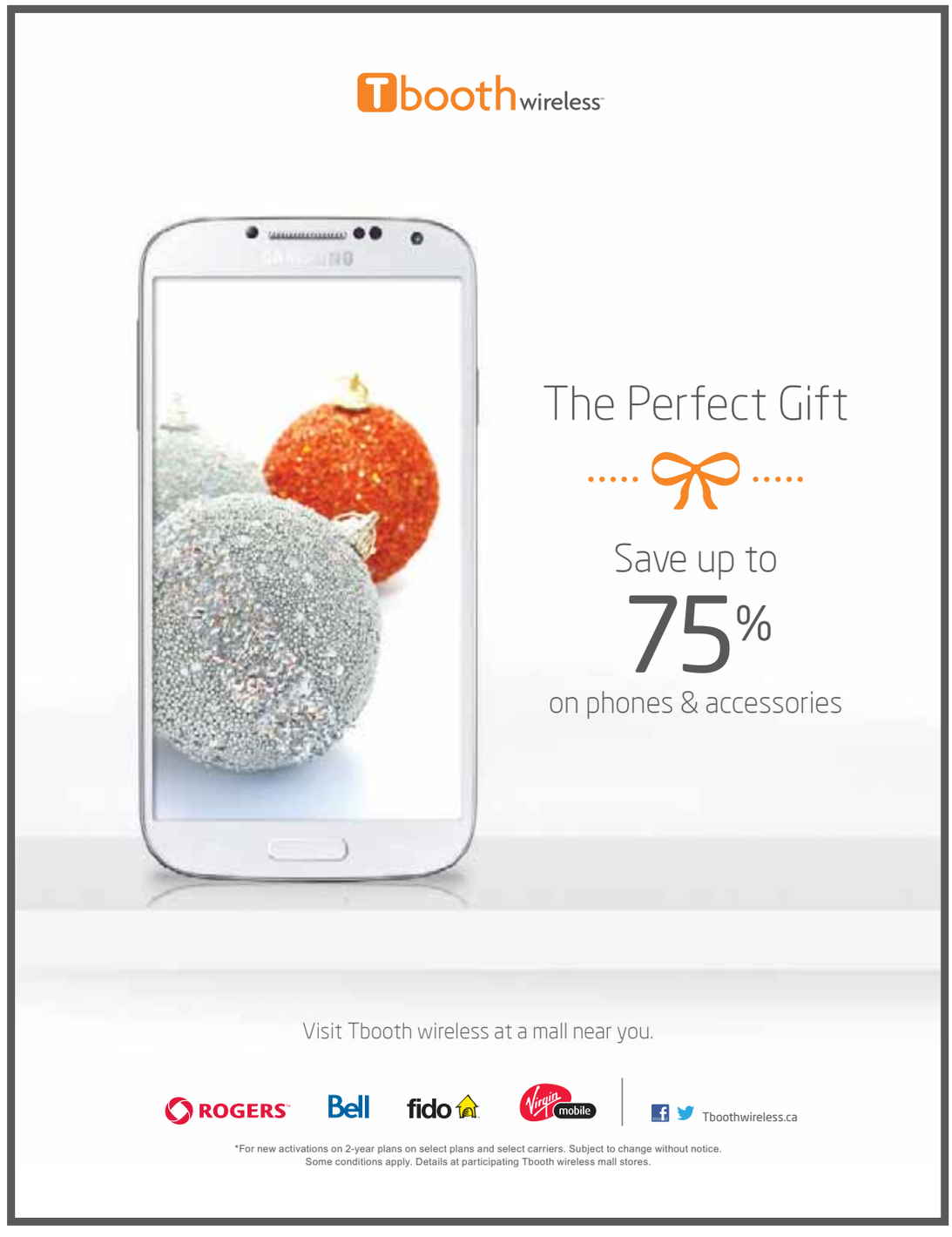
• **CC Claus: A Baseball Christmas Story, written with Ray Negron, pictures by Laura Seeley:** Yankees pitcher CC Sabathia enlists the help of George Steinbrenner and baseball stars of yore to help two boys in need of balls and gloves after their letter to Santa lands in Sabathia's fan mail. Ecco, ages five and up.

Box set

• **Puffin Hardcover Classic Box Set:** This gifty set of hardcovers with colourful, textured bindings offers a wide range of books for young readers, including A Little Princess, Anne of Green Gables, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, The Secret Garden, The Wind in the Willows and Peter Pan. Puffin Classics, ages eight and up. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Old meets new

Star Bright: A Christmas Story, by Alison McGhee and Peter H. Reynolds. The newest angel tries to come up with a gift for baby Jesus. She hurtles down to Earth and becomes the star that lights up the night sky. The book contrasts a futuristic heaven with old-world illustrations. Atheneum, ages four to eight.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Gossip

NED EHRBAR

METRO'S TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Angelina Jolie ALL PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

That Sony hack is the gift that keeps on giving

Now that all the personal Social Security Number and salary dust has settled from the massive Sony hack, we're starting to get down to some good dirt. And let's just put it this way: Super-producer Scott Rudin likely won't be working with Angelina Jolie again. In blistering emails back and forth with Sony chief Amy Pascal while trying to get their botched Steve Jobs biopic moving, Rudin continually bashed Jolie and her desire for a big-budget Cleopatra movie directed by David Fincher. How does Rudin really feel about Jolie? In his own words: "I'm not destroying my career over a minimally talented spoiled brat," Rudin writes. "She's a camp event and a celebrity and that's all, and the last thing anybody needs is to make a giant bomb with her that any fool could see coming. We will end up being the laughing stock of our industry and we will deserve it."

Scarlett Johansson weighs in on pregnancy

In keeping with the grand tradition of famous people procreating, new mom Scarlett Johansson has weighed in on the topic of losing weight post-pregnancy, thanks to the probing questions of Barbara Walters. And Johansson is firmly on Team Breastfeeding. "It's the best way to get back in shape," she tells Walters during a 10 Most Fascinating People of 2014 special interview. "(I do) the whole bit. I'm nursing and I love it." So there you go.

Lily Allen tweets anti-Twitter tirade

Lily Allen is livid over gossip reports that she is "trying to grow up" and giving up alcohol. Seriously, how dare they suggest such a thing? Instead, Allen took to Twitter to suggest that we all give up … Twitter? "Let's give up social media and the Mail Online. It's killing me. That is all," Allen tweeted, though it clearly was not actually all: "I feel like we're not evolved enough to handle the Internet, psychologically. I preferred real records and newspapers with news in them. Everything was just better and nicer. We were nicer. And I wouldn't be here." Here meaning Twitter, which she thinks we should all give up. Got it.

Avril facing health issues, asks fans to pray for her

Apparently singer and former Nickelback fan Avril Lavigne's current mysterious health issues are so serious that she's letting the hashtag #PrayForAvril be a thing — and even tweeting it herself. In a Twitter direct message exchange with a fan account, Lavigne revealed, "I feel bad because I haven't been able to say anything to the fans to let them (know) why I've been absent" and, "I'm not feeling well. I'm having some health issues. So please keep me in your prayers." Following the release of the exchange, a rep for Lavigne confirmed the health issues to Billboard while clarifying that the singer is not pregnant, despite speculation.

Avril Lavigne

Kim Kardashian

And God said, Let Kim Kardashian get fat

Kim Kardashian has an interesting take on pregnancy weight — and how much time God spends thinking about her. In an interview with Elle's U.K. edition, Mrs. Kanye West says of putting on weight while pregnant: "I'd think God was doing this for a reason. He was saying: 'Kim, you think you're so hot, but look what I can do to you.' My body just went crazy. After five months I swore I'd never get pregnant again. I got so huge and it felt like someone had taken over my body."

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The Daily Dish

SHARON THURNELL ENSURES VICTORY OVER DIRTY DISHES AS OXICLEAN™ CONTEST WINNER

"We decided to give OxiClean™ a try and WOW. So impressed. It works. It cleaned the dishes and all the stuff all the others left behind. I will continue to use it"
— Sharon Thurnell

Congratulations to Sharon Thurnell of Kitchener for being our official winner of the OxiClean™ Dishwasher Products Prize Pack to keep her dishes sparkling, and a $100 gift card for all her kitchen needs. For Sharon, gone are the days of cloudy stemware and scrubbing stubborn stuck on stains. Now she can have her cake, and a clean cake pan too.

Woman finds sunshine on a cloudy day

Recent bad weather seems to have no effect on the mood of Carrie of Winnipeg or her sparkling stemware. "In months nothing took away the cloudy film,"* she told The Daily Dish. But after discovering OxiClean™ Dishwashing 2-in-1 Booster + Rinse Agent, she's found that her grey skies, and dishes, have cleared up.

*"In months nothing took away the cloudy film."**
— Carrie, Winnipeg

Dishes dealt a holiday miracle

'Twas a few weeks before dinner, and all through the kitchen, a family was very busily wishin'. Not for presents and goodies, but for their dishes to be clean. For family was coming, and cloudy spots and film were clearly seen. When to their surprise, they went to the basement, discovering OxiClean™ Extreme Power Crystals™ Dishwasher Detergent Paks and OxiClean Dishwashing 2-in-1 Booster + Rinse Agent. A quick round of washing was all that they'd need, to save time to prepare for a family to feed. How their dishes sparkled and shined in all kinds of places, it was a cleaning miracle you could see on this family's faces.

*All stories depicted within this advertisement are fictional in nature. *Quotes are from real consumer reviews submitted for OxiClean™ Extreme Power Crystals™ Dishwasher Detergent Paks and OxiClean™ Dishwashing 2-in-1 Booster + Rinse Agent on ChickAdvisor.com as of December 1, 2014. Reviewers received free product sample.*

Clean the dirtiest dishes with OxiClean™ Dishwasher Products.

95% OF CHICKS DIG IT† ChickAdvisor.com

†Source: ChickAdvisor.com reviews for OxiClean™ Extreme Power Crystals™ Dishwasher Detergent Paks. Percent of chicks who "dig it" as of December1, 2014. Reviewers received free sample.

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LIFE 3

Meet Imaan Hammam, the newest Victoria's Secret model

Style. The Dutch model shares the 'cheesy' secret to her homeland's catwalk success at this season's lingerie show

"Yeah, there's a lot of energy and fun here — and I love London," beamed Imaan Hammam amongst the hubbub of the Victoria's Secret hair and makeup area.

The 18-year-old was one of five Dutch girls, including the brand's contracted supermodel Doutzen Kroes, to strut alongside the other 26 models on arguably the most beautiful runway on the planet. While being Dutch apparently helps, the stunner, who is of Moroccan-Egyptian descent, talks about her VS debut in Earls Court, London and what it takes for an 'Angel' to earn her wings.

There are quite a few Dutch girls walking in the show this year. What's your explanation for the takeover?
Yeah, five girls! I don't know … we just have good food in the Netherlands. Yeah, it's the food and the cheese.

Any cheese in particular?
Young Belegen.

Is there much camaraderie between all the Dutch natives?
Yeah, we're doing a group picture later today with Doutzen and everyone.

Has it always been your dream to walk for Victoria's Secret?
Actually when I was young, I used to watch this show every year and then two weeks ago I had the casting!

Were you nervous?
I was dead nervous. I couldn't even believe it. And then two days after, my agency called me and they were like, "You're doing the show" and I was like, "Really? No way!"

It's your first time doing Victoria's Secret, so how did it compare to other shows?
Yeah, it's the first time. You have to train a lot.

Do you now have abs of steel?
(Flexes her muscles) Yep, you have to be powerful, but also be yourself — that's what VS is about.

Did you have to change your diet?
A lot of vegetables, smoothies and plenty of water!

Are you going to let your hair down post-show?
I'm going to the after-party, then straight to my hotel room and ordering room service — hamburgers, pizza … everything. Now I need that stuff. METRO IN NEW YORK CITY

Imman Hammam struts her stuff during the Victoria's Secret fashion show at Earls Court on December 2, 2014 in London, England. The full show aired on CBS Tuesday night. GETTY IMAGES

Angelic ambitions

"You have to be powerful but also be yourself — that's what VS is about."
Imaan Hammam
Victoria's Secret model

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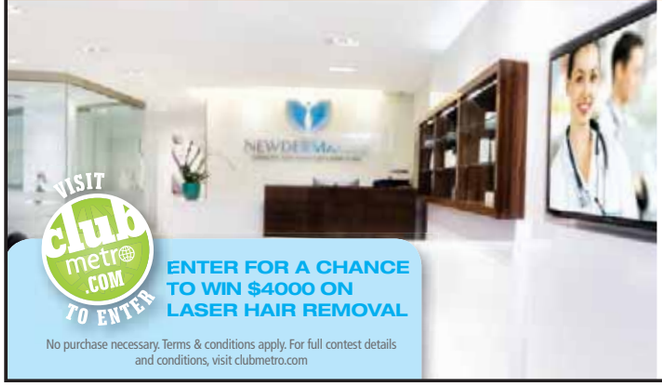

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Top wearable tech of 2014

2014 saw an explosion in fashionable tech, from dedicated fitness and health trackers to watches and augmented reality solutions. It also saw the luxury world sit up, take notice, and start collaborating with tech giants on a range of upmarket gadgets.

AFP

DVF Made for Glass

DVF & Google Glass

Google was, of course, one of the first on the scene when it comes to high-tech eyewear. Diane Von Furstenberg first incorporated the device into her Spring 2013 runway show to offer her fans a unique insider's perspective from the catwalk. This year, the American designer introduced five new Google Glass frame styles and eight sets of shades, all designed to create a little more fashion buzz about the wearable tech item which has had plenty of people buzzing about the potential of augmented reality.

Tory Burch & Fitbit

This year Fitbit found a stylish way to keep their fans happy. They teamed up with Tory Burch to create three pieces designed to accommodate the Fitbit Flex ($99.95, sold separately). The lineup, which was released this summer, includes silicone-printed bracelets ($38) in a choice of blue or pink, a brass fret pendant necklace ($175) and a brass hinged bracelet ($195).

Tory Burch for Fitbit pendant

Fendi's first headphones created in collaboration with Beats by Dr. Dre

Fendi & Beats

The Italian luxury brand teamed up with the now Apple-owned cult headphone brand for a line of luxurious over-ear cans, which were unveiled during the Spring/Summer 2015 menswear show in June this year. The headphones are crafted in Selleria leather and handstitched by Fendi's artisans. An ultra-luxe black crocodile leather version was also created to celebrate the launch, but the colour options include sunflower yellow, fire red, emerald green, blackboard and asphalt, all in ton-sur-ton design with the Fendi logo on the side and top.

Apple Watch

Apple's investment in fashion and luxury executives (including the former CEOs of Burberry and Yves Saint Laurent) shows its desire to be a mainstream luxury company. Also where Apple leads, others follow. Rumours about an Apple Watch have been swirling round the industry for years, now Apple is set to deliver a product, we'll see how revolutionary this technology might prove, especially with a luxury 18-Karat Apple Watch Edition model, looking to compete with high-end watchmakers.

The Apple Watch collection

Canadian street style

Spotted in: Toronto

Name: Saira

Age: 26

Occupation: Marketing manager

What she's wearing
Dream Monster pants, Walter Baker W18 sweater, Jon & Jen Jacket and Converse shoes.

Her inspiration
"Textures! I love wearing textures. If I have a piece of clothing that I am not sure how to wear, or what to wear it with, I will go on Pinterest or Instagram for some style ideas and inspiration. "

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Trends Report

Don't let a shapeless parka be your signature style this winter; don a cape to keep you snug and stylish instead. Go online to Trends Report for inspiration to dress up your winter wardrobe and see how versatile a cape can be.

- **Online.** metronews.ca/trends-report
- **Follow** Irene on Twitter @MetroIreneK and Instagram @kuanirene
- **Photo: Getty Images**

HOME

Condos and the single woman

Real estate. Whether they're divorced, retired or young careerists, women are big on buying condos

CONDO TRENDS
Duncan McAllister
life@metronews.ca

A view of Tridel's TRIO at Atria in North York. Buildings with a concierge, underground parking and enclosed, well-lit grounds provide a stronger sense of security. CONTRIBUTED

More people are living alone today than at any other point in history, and the single-person household is now the fastest-growing category in Canada's real estate market.

Statistics show that the conventional family unit is in decline. According to 2011 census data, there are more Canadians living by themselves than there are couples with children. This shift is caused by many factors and has a huge influence on the condominium market.

Singles conjure up an image of young, professional first-time buyers, but the age range varies, according to Ralph Fox, a broker at Sage Real Estate. Affluent seniors, divorcees, delayed marriages; people live by themselves for a variety of reasons.

In an interesting shift in buying trends, single women are driving a significant portion of real estate purchases, now accounting for 30 per cent of Toronto condo sales and 20 per cent of home sales. That's almost one in three of Toronto's condos. CMHC data collected in 2011 reveals that women also represented 65 per cent of condo owners living alone.

"What I'm seeing, especially this year, is a lot of single women looking to buy condos. Generally they've been renting for a period of time." says Fox. He attributes this trend to two major influences. Financially, single women see a condo as a good investment as opposed to renting. From a lifestyle perspective, they're realizing that it doesn't necessarily make sense to wait for a partner in order to buy their first home. "They're asserting their ability to move forward and have their own future," says Fox.

Toronto single women are in the lead on condo ownership. JACQUELINE ROSALES

Gea Koleva recently purchased a one-bedroom plus den in the thriving King and Dufferin neighbourhood. "I wanted to get out of the rental market to have something of my own."

As a busy, career-oriented marketing professional, she was looking for the convenience that a condo offers.

"I can't see myself in a house where I have to put money towards repairs. I would rather pay maintenance fees and know that things are taken care of."

Single female adults represent a powerful condo-buying contingent and developers have taken notice. Research suggests that women's tastes and preferences have had an impact on changing design cues, resulting in subtle improvements like larger closets, better bathroom storage and lighting. Building security is also an issue. A building with a concierge, underground parking and enclosed, well-lit grounds provides a stronger sense of security.

Women condo owners

65%

The percentage of condo owners who live alone that are women.
Source: CMHC

Legal Matters

Land transfer tax disparity

My mother purchased a condo a couple of weeks ago and she was showing me the paperwork. It appears she paid several thousands of dollars in Land Transfer Tax. I called the city and they told me what the tax should have been. I understand that there is also provincial Land Transfer Tax. When I looked at my mom's paperwork, there appears to be a negative discrepancy of several hundred dollars between what my mom paid to the city and to the province. What should I do at this point?

LEGAL MATTERS
Jeffrey Cowan
home@metronews.ca

I would contact your mother's lawyer concerning this matter. You will probably get the following response: Municipal Land Transfer Tax and provincial Land Transfer Tax are different taxation regimes. There are different rates and depending on the purchase price and your mother's first-time home-buying status, you may pay more to the province and less to the city or vice versa. They are rarely the same. The tax amounts are automatically calculated with the registration program that lawyers use to transfer property. So I assume that the tax amounts are correct and your mom's lawyer will be able to verify this for you and your mother.

Follow Jeff Cowan on Twitter @Cowan_Law or on the website cowanlaw.ca, or email him at jeff@cowanlaw.ca.

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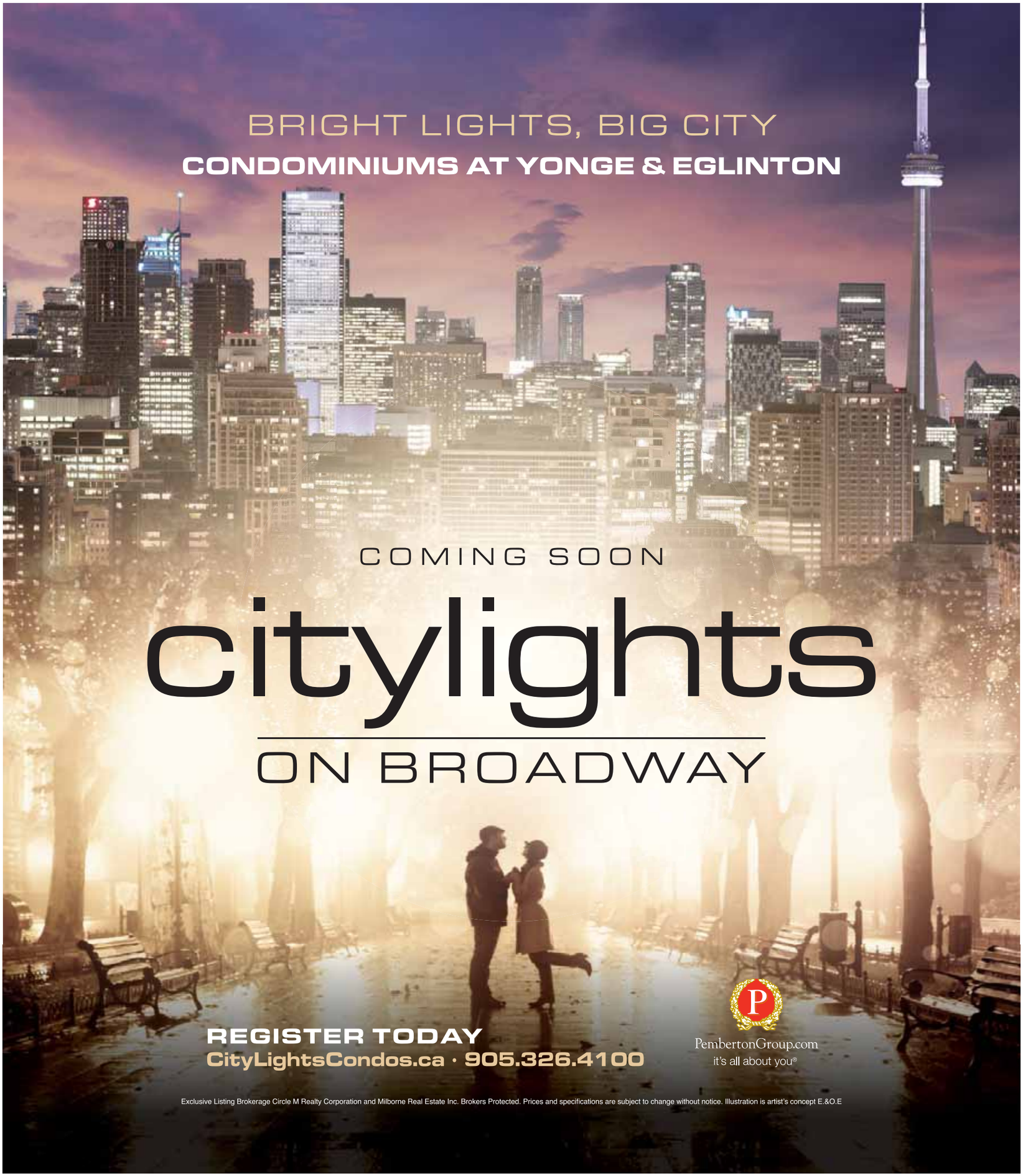
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College Park. Condos bring new dynamic

College Park has become a condo neighbourhood in its own right, with new developments ringing the park and changing the dynamic of the streetscape at Yonge and College streets.

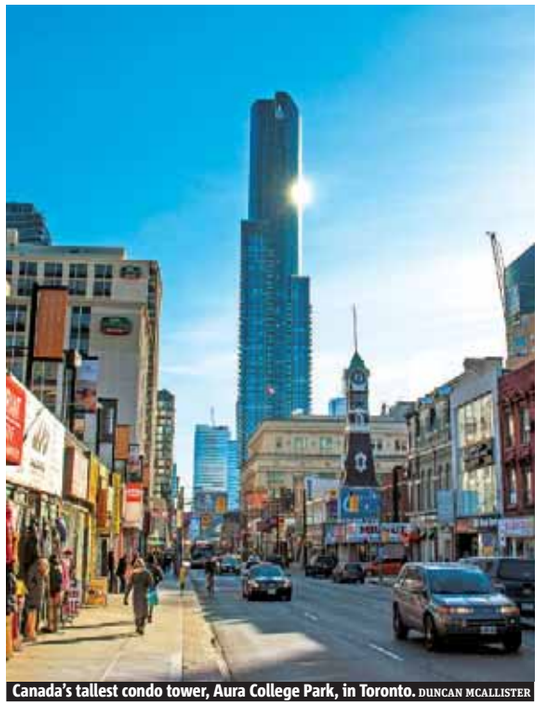
First out of the gate was the Residence of College Park, the twin towers located at 761 and 763 Bay Street.

Almost completed is Canderel's Aura. At 78 floors and 272 metres tall, it's Canada's tallest condo tower, a prominent obelisk on Toronto's skyline. The Shops at Aura adds 35,000 square feet of new retail space in a four-level podium underneath the tower.

With a multitude of stores and services in the lower level and a PATH connection to the subway, there's also a huge Bed Bath and Beyond showroom, a Marshall's department store and a fitness centre on the fourth level.

Last week, Canderel celebrated the groundbreaking of their new YC condominium project, a 63-storey glass tower just north of College Park.

"This will mark our fourth project in the College Park area and upon completion of this one, we will have delivered 2,800 units within this node," said Canderel's executive VP, Ben Rogowski.



Canada's tallest condo tower, Aura College Park, in Toronto. DUNCAN MCALLISTER

DUNCAN MCALLISTER

Changing the conversation

Elevating the debate is key

BRYAN TUCKEY
President and CEO of the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD) can be found at twitter.com/bildgta, facebook.com/bildgta, and bildblogs.ca.

One thing I've learned in my 30-plus-year career is that engaging in a fact-based discussion is a critical component to elevating debate.

Two recently released publications have done exactly that, while offering an interesting perspective on the impact of Ontario's greenbelt on the cost of housing in the GTA.

The first, an opinion piece in one of Canada's largest newspapers, outlined some of the challenges spawned by the greenbelt following its 10-year anniversary. The article pointed to diminishing land supply and escalating housing prices while suggesting that the Greenbelt Act may have had significant unintended consequences.

The second example came from a Frontier Centre for Public Policy report, titled Housing Affordability and the Standard of Living in Toronto. Its author Wendell Cox argues policies like the Greenbelt "increase house prices relative to income, thereby reducing discretionary income and the standard of living while increasing poverty."

Some of the recommendations found in the report include implementing infrastructure funding options that improve housing affordability and adopting transportation policies that increase mobility.

BILD has long advocated for the need to build new infrastructure to accommodate growth, as well as the importance of developing a fair and reasonable infrastructure funding strategy. After all, it is not fair to new-home buyers to pay the full cost of infrastructure that will be used by all residents for generations.

It's important that people across the country are having difficult discussions on these important industry issues as we continue working with our government partners to build quality, complete communities that people in the GTA can be proud to call home.

The Beacon Condominiums' lobby (top) and steam room (below). CONTRIBUTED

It's the Beacon for a lush life

Meet the condo

- **What.** The Beacon Condominiums
- **Builder.** Sorbara Development Group
- **Location.** 5200 Yonge St., North York
- **Building.** 35 storeys with 372 suites
- **Sizes.** 488 to 1,346 sq. ft.
- **Pricing.** From high-$200,000s to over $900,000
- **Suites.** One bedroom, two bedroom and two bedroom plus den
- **Status.** Pre-construction, now selling
- **Website.** beaconcondos.ca

The project overview

Designed as a series of frames, the structure will add height and texture to the burgeoning North York skyline. The podium houses over 15,000 square feet of retail space, topped by a slender glass tower with 372 luxury residences.

Location and transit

Beacon will have direct access to the North York Centre subway station as well as shopping and amenities through an underground walkway. The 401, Don Valley Parkway and Bayview Avenue are all close by.

Building amenities

Beacon will offer a 24-hour concierge service, a lounge space and a games room. Spa-like amenities include a sculpting gym, Zen spa retreat, a steam room and a yoga studio. There's an outdoor terrace and reflecting pool.

In the neighbourhood

Within walking distance are Mel Lastman Square, the Gibson House Museum, the Douglas Snow Aquatic Centre and the North York Central Library. Plus, there are plenty of parks, green space and nearby walking trails.

Fast, fabulous fixes for Festivus

There are only two weeks left to spruce up your place before the big day. Here are five changes you can make that will create the biggest impact — just in the nick of time

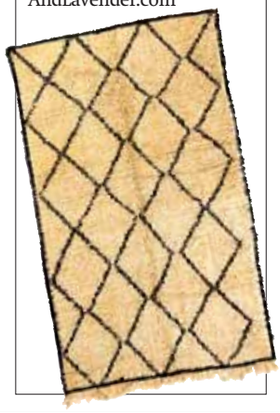
DESIGN CENTRE
Karl Lohnes
home@metronews.ca

Dyna-light!

Hang a sculptural light fixture for uber-stylish celebrations to set a tone that will last far beyond the holidays. Eurofase's Cameo 4-Light Pendant, $1,228, Lowes.ca

Diamond in the rug

An authentic Moroccan woven rug will cozy up your seating area with its retro-warmth underfoot. Hebe Beni Ourain Berber, (5x9 feet), $1,900, Indigo-AndLavender.com



ALL PHOTOS: CONTRIBUTED

Check it out

Your bed is the largest piece of furniture to make an impact with. Buffalo Check Flannel Cover Set, from $95, Simons.ca

Curtain call

Update the smallest room in your house in the biggest way. Winter Wonderland Shower Curtain & Hook Set, $40, BedBathAndBeyond.ca

Blanket statement

A trend-setting faux fur throw looks great at the end of the bed or slung over the arm of a sofa. Grizzly Faux Fur Throw, $120, UrbanBarn.com

Through Dec. 14, with every $5 donation by Urban Barn customers, a new fleece blanket will be donated to a local homeless shelter within the community as part of the Blanket The Country In Warmth campaign.

Go on vacation every time you come home

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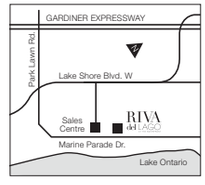

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This recipe serves two. MAES STUDIO, INC.

As if French toast could get any better...

Waffled Chocolate-Stuffed French Toast with Whipped Butter.

An embedded layer of chocolate elevates this breakfast treat

1. Preheat the waffle iron on high. Preheat the oven on its lowest setting.

2. In a pie pan or deep dish, whisk together the eggs, milk, vanilla, and salt.

3. Place 2 slices of bread in the egg mixture and soak them until they've absorbed some of the liquid, 30 seconds. Flip the slices and soak them for another 30 seconds.

4. Coat both sides of the waffle iron grid with nonstick spray. Place a slice of soaked bread on the waffle iron and pile a little less than half of the chocolate chips on the slice. Top with the second slice of soaked bread, close the waffle iron, and cook until the bread is golden brown and the chocolate is melted, 3 to 4 minutes. There should be no trace of uncooked egg mixture.

5. Remove the French toast from the waffle iron and repeat Steps 3 and 4 to make the second batch. Place the finished French toast in the oven to keep it warm.

6. Slice the French toast into quarters. Pop open the "pocket" in each quarter and stuff the remaining chocolate chips into the opening. The residual heat will melt the chocolate.

7. Top each portion with the Whipped Butter and dust with the powdered sugar before serving.

Whipped Butter

Whipped butter adds a restaurant-quality touch to the dish. It's best to use salted butter.

1. To make whipped butter, set out the butter at room temperature for 1 hour to allow it to soften. Once it has softened, put it in a mixing bowl and beat with an electric mixer on medium speed until the butter is fluffy and slightly lighter in color, 1 minute.

RECIPE EXCERPTED FROM WILL IT WAFFLE? YES, IT WILL BY DANIEL SHUMSKI (WORKMAN PUBLISHING). COPYRIGHT © 2014.

Ingredients

French Toast
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1/4 tsp pure vanilla extract
- Pinch of salt
- 4 slices bread, such as challah or brioche, cut thick
- Nonstick cooking spray
- 1/2 cup chocolate chips (semi sweet, bittersweet, or milk chocolate)
- 1 tbsp Whipped Butter (recipe follows)
- Powdered sugar, to taste

Whipped Butter
- 8 tbsp (1 stick) salted butter

Cookbook of the Week

Waffle your faves

Daniel Shumski has done all the messy work of figuring out what foods will waffle and presents his findings (53 perfected recipes) in Will It Waffle? Yes It Will!

Waffling foods other than waffles is not just a novelty but leads to great culinary innovations. For example, waffled bacon reaches perfect crispness and cooks super fast in the two-sided heat source.

Recipes in the book include Waffled Cuban Sandwich, Crisscrossed Crab Cakes, Crispy Sesame Waffled Kale, and Waffled Macaroni and Cheese. METRO

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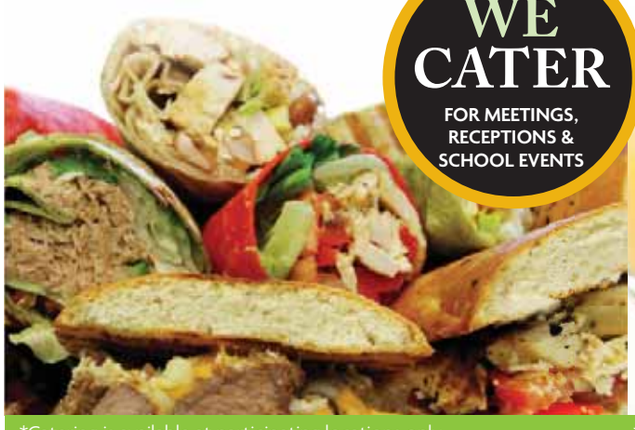

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FAMILY FUN GUIDE

BY ASTRID VAN DEN BROEK

Where to go, what to do and how to get there. Here are this week's activity listings

WINTERFEST

Meet Frozen's Ice Queen, make eco-friendly arts and crafts, meet a dog-sledding team, and then have your pet's photo taken with Santa! At Queen's Quay Terminal, Dec. 13-14, and Dec. 20-21. For more, visit waterfrontbia.com.

ON YOUR TOES

It's opening weekend for the Nutcracker, the classic ballet at Christmas time, featuring sword-yielding dancing rats, the Sugar Plum Fairy, and of course the Nutcracker himself. The Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, Dec. 13-Jan. 3. For more, visit national.ballet.ca

CRUISE WITH SANTA

Take to the lake on this one-hour cruise where children should bring their wish lists and best smiles to share with Santa. The ninth annual Santa Cruise leaves from the foot of York Street, Dec. 13-14 and Dec. 20-21. Visit mariposacruises.com for more.

DESSERTS BY LAMPLIGHT

Wander through the lamp-lit rooms of the Scarborough Museum while enjoying carollers and digging into a decadent and delicious dessert. Pre-registration required and early booking is recommended. Dec. 13, 6:30 p.m.-9 p.m. Go to www1.toronto.ca for more.

SOUNDS OF CHRISTMAS

Led by award-winning artistic director Zimfira Poloz, take in this concert featuring more than 100 young voices. Enjoy refreshments too. At Humbercrest United Church, Dec. 13, 3 p.m. Adults $25, students/seniors/youth 6-18 $15, children up to 5, free. Tickets at the door on concert day. Visit youngvoicestoronto.com for more.

CHANUKAH FUN FAIR

Enjoy entertainers, jump around in a Jungle Gym and fashion some Chanukah masterpieces. Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Dec. 14, 2 p.m. - 5 p.m. Pre-registration is required – call 416-924-6211, x 0. $15 per family (up to 5); at the door $20 per family. For more, visit milesnadaljcc.ca.

"Someday I'd like to play on Team Canada." – *Madison, age 8*

Every kid has a someday. It may be something fantastical like flying to the moon, something practical like following their dad into construction or something we all can relate to like wanting to be surrounded by love. No matter what it is, we want to give them the support they need to get there. That's why we're pledging $100 million over five years to help over a million children do just that. Let's make every kid's someday™ happen.

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MLS

New teams take shape with expansion draft

Orlando City SC and New York City FC stocked their rosters Wednesday, with Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver among those losing players via the MLS expansion draft.

As often happens in such drafts, some moves were temporary. New York took Toronto FC winger Daniel Lovitz in the fourth round, only to trade the 23-year-old back for allocation money when the trade window reopened after the draft.

New York City FC took Vancouver Whitecaps midfielder Mehdi Ballouchy in the sixth round while Orlando City SC chose Montreal Impact defender Heath Pearce in the seventh.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Car crash aftermath

Fractures in lower back force Newton out of lineup

Cam Newton will not play Sunday against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers while recovering from an automobile crash that left him with two fractures in his lower back.

Panthers coach Ron Rivera confirmed Wednesday that Derek Anderson will start and Joe Webb will be his backup.

"I won't expose him," Rivera said. "I don't want to put him in a bad position."

Early Wednesday, Newton was discharged from the hospital. It was a day after he was injured when his truck crashed and overturned in a two-car accident. Charlotte-Mecklenburg police issued no citations for the accident.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tall talk

"I'm not going to sprout five inches over the course of the week ... I need to overcome it with other pieces of my game."

Browns QB Johnny Manziel, who is six feet tall, responding to Bengals coach Marvin Lewis calling him a "midget."

Maple Leafs gun down Red Wings in shootout

Red Wings forward Riley Sheahan, left, tries controlling the puck behind the Maple Leafs net against Dion Phaneuf, Nazem Kadri and Cody Franson in Detroit on Wednesday. Mike Santorelli scored the deciding goal in the shootout and the Leafs won 2-1. Tyler Bozak also converted his shootout attempt, while Phil Kessel notched his 15th marker of the season in regulation. CARLOS OSORIO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Team Canada closely monitoring phenom

World juniors. McDavid has cast removed; status a question mark ahead of selection camp

The status of Erie Otters forward Connor McDavid remained a question mark on the eve of the Canadian team selection camp for the upcoming world junior championship.

McDavid, who hasn't played since breaking a bone in his right hand on Nov. 12, had his cast removed this week and is cleared for non-contact practice. But Canadian head coach Benoit Groulx said it's still too early to know what to expect from the star player.

"We're going to talk with Connor tomorrow and obviously it's great news for us to have him on the ice to skate," Groulx said Wednesday in a phone interview. "We're going to discuss with him how he feels and he's going to be monitored by the doctor.

"Obviously it's going to be a day-to-day evaluation.

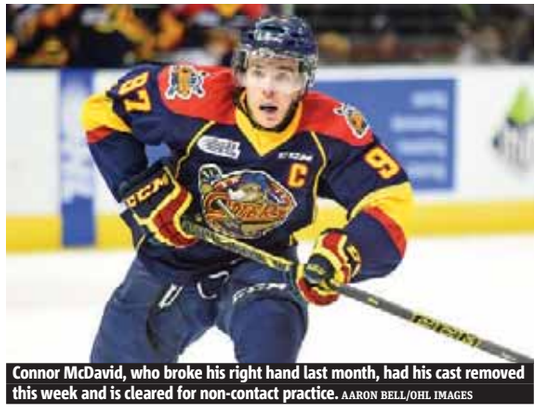
"We'll start from there and see how it goes."

Groulx plans to meet with team brass and doctors on Wednesday night and Thursday to discuss McDavid's potential timeline.

McDavid, who has 51 points in 18 games this season, is an early favourite to be selected first overall in the 2015 NHL Entry Draft. He will likely be eased back but is expected to be ready for Canada's opener Dec. 26 against Slovakia.

Groulx is expected to ice a lineup that features several 19-year-old players with an emphasis on speed and skill. Halifax Mooseheads goaltender Zach Fucale is returning after playing for Canada at last year's tournament in Malmo, Sweden.

The original camp invite list included 29 players (10 defencemen, 17 forwards, two goalies). A total of 22 players will make the cut. A third netminder could be added during the tournament if needed. THE CANADIAN PRESS



Connor McDavid, who broke his right hand last month, had his cast removed this week and is cleared for non-contact practice. AARON BELL/OHL IMAGES

Eligible NHL players

The Canadian side got a boost this week when the New York Rangers confirmed that 19-year-old forward Anthony Duclair would be loaned to the team.

- NHL clubs have until the Dec. 19 roster freeze to decide whether they will loan players to the team. There is a chance Jonathan Drouin of the Tampa Bay Lightning, Curtis Lazar of the Ottawa Senators and Bo Horvat of the Vancouver Canucks could still be added.

4 SPORTS

Man City shakes off blues in Rome

Champions League. Minus three superstars, Premier League champions top Roma to advance to tournament's final 16

Samri Nasri scored one goal and set up another as Manchester City won 2-0 at Roma on Wednesday to reach the knockout phase of the Champions League, eliminating an Italian side that still seemed to be feeling the effects of its 7-1 thrashing by Bayern Munich.

It looked as if Roma was set to go through until Nasri found the target with a long, rising shot on the hour mark. Then Pablo Zabaleta doubled the visitors' lead in the 88th following a perfect pass from Nasri.

Roma's best chance was a header off the post from Kostas Manolas in the 72nd.

Bayern Munich easily won Group E — considered perhaps the competition's toughest — with 15 points following a 3-0 home win over CSKA Moscow. City finished second with eight points, Roma was third with five and will play in the Europa League. CSKA finished last, also with five points.

The victory was all the more impressive considering City was missing its three top players.

Top scorer Sergio Aguero is out with a serious knee injury, star midfielder Yaya Toure was suspended, and captain Vincent Kompany sat out injured.

"I don't think that this team is just one player and I think that today demonstrated that," City coach Manuel Pellegrini said.

Entering the Stadio Olimpico, City faced a steep challenge to avoid its second group-phase exit in three years.

City struggled at home in a 1-1 draw with Roma and in both matches against CSKA but had already showed signs of a recovery when Aguero scored a hat trick in a come-from-behind win over Bayern in the penultimate round of group matches.

"We recovered and I think we're playing exactly the same way we're playing in the Premier League," Pellegrini said.

Roma controlled at the start but failed to take advantage.

"In the first 15 minutes we could have done more and scored," Roma coach Rudi Garcia said. "But we were also unlucky. They hit the post and the ball went in. We hit the post and it bounced out.

"But they're more mature and have more experience in these types of matches," Garcia added. "We're still learning."

Without Aguero, Edin Dzeko spearheaded City's attack with support from James Milner, Nasri and Jesus Navas.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lost cause

Combined with Bayern's win, a 0-0 draw would have been enough for Roma to advance — which would have been no small feat following a devastating 7-1 home loss to Bayern in October.

Samir Nasri of Manchester City celebrates after scoring the opening goal in a 2-0 Champions League win over AS Roma on Wednesday night in Rome. Nasri also set up the insurance goal as City put aside its European struggles to qualify for the last 16 out of Group E. Scan the image with your Metro News app for a roundup of the rest of Wednesday's action.

GABRIEL BOUYS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Bulls' defence unusually generous early in season

Tom Thibodeau, Joakim Noah and the Chicago Bulls have allowed 100.5 points per game this season as of Wednesday afternoon. They allowed 91.8 throughout the whole of last season. STEPHEN DUNN/GETTY IMAGES

Compared to their high standard, the Chicago Bulls are struggling on defence. Everyone on the team agrees with that part.

When it comes to talk of trust issues, then everything gets a little murky.

Heading into Wednesday's game against Brooklyn, Chicago was allowing 100.5 points per game, tied for 19th in the league. The Bulls allowed an NBA-low 91.8 points last season and 92.9 points for the 2012-13 season, which ranked third.

Chicago allowed more than 100 points 10 times in its first 20 games. It allowed opponents to reach triple digits just 16 times last season.

Since Saturday night's 112-102 loss to Golden State, Defensive Player of the Year Joakim Noah and forward Taj Gibson have talked about trust issues involving new players. But coach Tom Thibodeau dismissed that out of hand before the game against the Nets.

"That's garbage. That's garbage," he said. "Trust, it's work. It's work. That's how you build trust. So you got to know what you're doing. You got to be tied together. You got to work at it. It's a cop-out."

The schedule has played a role in Chicago's high average. The Bulls lost 132-129 to high-scoring Dallas in double overtime on Dec. 2, and the Warriors also are one of the NBA's best offensive teams. But Chicago also surrendered 115 points in a win at lowly Philadelphia, and lost 99-90 to Indiana on Nov. 15.

"Where you get trust is from the work. The magic is in the work," Thibodeau said. "It's working together. It's timing. It's being tied together. One guy being off is going to hurt, so you need everyone working together. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Trusting Taj

"It's just new guys. That's all it is. Most of the guys are coming from teams that are not really like the defensive-minded team first.... So of course it's going to happen."

Bulls power forward Taj Gibson

Tennis

Management giant signs Bouchard

Eugenie Bouchard has signed with WME-IMG, saying the sports management powerhouse will help "maximize the value of my brand."

The 20-year-old from Westmount, Que., jumped to fifth in world rankings this year to become Canada's highest-ranked singles player ever.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

MLB

Move Rays to Montreal: Boras

Given the struggles of the Tampa Bay Rays to draw fans in Florida, agent Scott Boras says he thinks the team should move to Canada.

"Everyone always wonders why they're not playing in Montreal," Boras said Wednesday. "I think it has a chance to be far more successful than some of the other cities."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MLB

White Sox ink deal with Robertson

Closer David Robertson and the Chicago White Sox have finalized a $46-million US, four-year contract.

The right-hander, who turns 30 in April, gets $10 million next year, $11 million in 2016, $12 million in 2017 and $13 million in 2018 under the agreement announced Wednesday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MLB

Cubs land Lester for six years at $155 million

Jon Lester agreed late Tuesday night to a $155 million, six-year contract with the Cubs, the first big deal of the off-season involving a top-level starting pitcher and one Chicago hopes will help end more than a century of frustration at Wrigley Field's Friendly Confines.

Lester's contract contains an option for 2021 that, if it becomes guaranteed, would make the deal worth $170 million over seven seasons. The average annual value of $25.8 million is the second-highest for a pitcher behind Clayton Kershaw's $30.7 million as part of a $215 million, seven-year deal with the Los Angeles Dodgers that began this year.

"It's not often you get to win the lottery, and we won the baseball lottery this year," new Cubs manager Joe Maddon said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jon Lester with the Athletics in August GETTY IMAGES

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AUGMENTED REALITY

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metro AR

→ See the full instructions on Metro's Voices page.

Horoscopes by Sally Brompton

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
Make the most of today's positive influences to start something new. This is a great time for career maters and also for affairs of the heart.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
You will have to make sacrifices over the next few days but that's OK. You will get your reward later in the month when the Sun moves in your favour.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
Let others know what you think and feel, especially if you think you're out of your depth and feel you could use some help.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
You may come into money over the next few days — and it's possibble that you will spend it all in record quick time! Mars in the wealth area of your chart warns others won't be pleased by your extravagance.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Put your needs first today and don't feel guilty about it. Some people may say you are selfish, and maybe you are, but what of it? You have desires and every right to satisfy them.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Don't let work get on top of you. There are many ways you can make life easier and the most obvious is to stop pushing yourself so hard. Everything will get done in its own time.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Some of the people you meet today and tomorrow could be important to you professionally or financially in the future, so be on your best behavior.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Look and act confident today, even though you may not feel it. If your rivals detect fear they will be after you in an instant.

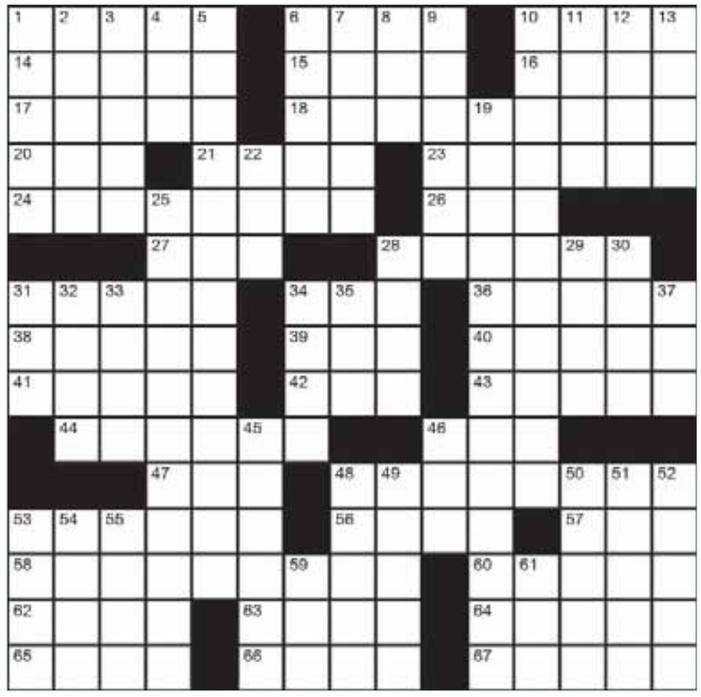
♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Mercury in your sign fills your head with lots of ideas, but how do you decide which are good and which are bad? You don't have to decide immediately. Note your ideas down and come back to them later.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
The most important thing now is that you get your financial house in order and cut back on activities that waste your time and money.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
If others have power over you it is only because you have given them that power — and it is in your power to take it back. Be forceful today but don't be emotional about it.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
The more others say what you're trying to do is impossible the more determined you'll be to prove them wrong. Your confidence may waver but you should reach your goal.

Crossword: Canada Across and Down by Kelly Ann Buchanan



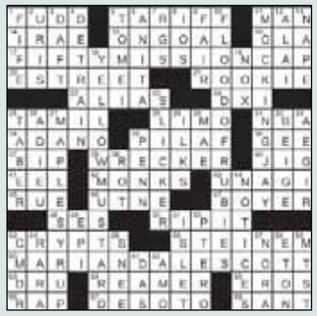
Across

1. "I am the walrus / Goo goo _'__." - The Beatles
6. Streetside serving
10. Designer Vera
14. Leader
15. Mr. Gruffudd
16. Ancient instrument
17. Canadian filmmaker Mr. Brassard
18. "Boom Goes the Dynamite" Toronto rapper
20. Particular pan
21. Janis' comical hubby
23. "It's on me!": 2 wds.
24. Ontario's 'cow' village
26. Beirut's locale [abbr.]
27. "Really?" remarks
28. Montreal 'river'
31. Tony __, "The Commish" character
34. __ Fighters
36. Tine
38. Keyboard instrument
39. Deli serving
40. George Fox's "_ __ You My Word"
41. Old 'town' in France
42. Whichever
43. Kira __, "Star Trek: Deep Space Nine" character
44. Nut kind
46. Farming, briefly
47. Poet's 'far'
48. Sir John A. Macdonald burial city
53. Compete in the WWE, colloquially
56. CCR tune
57. "Sheila" singer Tommy
58. Squash sort
60. Astound
62. Stick _ __ in the lake
63. "__ _ minute?"
64. Appointed
65. Rove
66. Canadian artist Mr. Gaucher
67. __-turvy

Down

1. __ paper
2. Madrid's month-after-May
3. Taco kit brand, with Paso: 2 wds.
4. Poet's 'above'
5. Arctic: 'Aglu' is a __ __ made by seals in the ice
6. Manitoba town; or, 'Lord of the Rings' role
7. "I'll see __ __ Friday, then?"
8. Sprinted
9. Playwright Eugene
10. Restaurant for actors Donnie and Mark, and their chef brother Paul, with a new location in Toronto
11. Take _ __ (Drink some)
12. Songstress Ms. Hendryx
13. Stone hue
19. Landform viewed from Thunder Bay so-named because of its outline: 2 wds.
22. CV
25. The what includes Earth and Jupiter?: 2 wds.
28. Conniving
29. __ dire (Questioning process of prospective jurors)
30. Jealousy
31. Bawl
32. Dundee's li'l animal
33. Water: Spanish
34. Imperfection
35. 'Ball' suffix
37. Some stoves
45. Get-up-and-go
46. Plus
48. 1971 Donald Sutherland movie
49. Wee bits
50. The __, Charlie Chaplin's persona
51. Seepages
52. Dependent
53. Double _ __ Ranch (Setting on "The Roy Rogers Show")
54. Prefix to 'matic'
55. Plato's promenade
59. Pre-Dec. month
61. Chairman in "Revolution"

Yesterday's Crossword

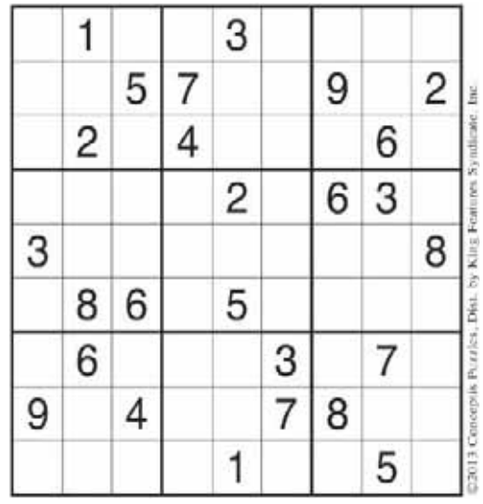


Online

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.



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Yesterday's Sudoku

7	3	5	1	9	4	2	8	6
4	6	9	8	2	3	5	1	7
2	1	8	7	6	5	4	3	9
5	4	7	2	3	9	8	6	1
9	8	6	4	1	7	3	2	5
3	2	1	5	8	6	7	9	4
1	9	4	3	7	2	6	5	8
8	5	3	6	4	1	9	7	2
6	7	2	9	5	8	1	4	3

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